

AN ACCOUNT
OF THE
Treason and Sedition,

COMMITTED BY THE
London Corresponding Society,

THE
Society for Constitutional Information,

THE OTHER

Societies of London, Sheffield, Norwich, Manchester, Bristol, Coventry, Nottingham, Derby, Birmingham, Leeds, Newcastle, Hereford, York, Edinburgh, Dublin, &c. &c. their correspondence with the Convention and Jacobin Societies at Paris; sending Deputies to France; admitting Barrere, Roland, and St. André, into the Society for Constitutional Information; also a dangerous letter to Mr. Sheridan, Chairman of a Society, calling themselves the Friends of the People;

AND

The whole of the Two REPORTS,
Presented to the HON. HOUSE of COMMONS,
BY

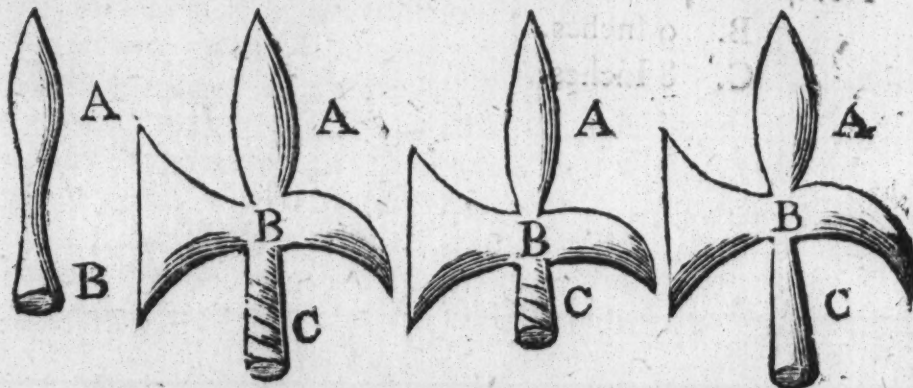
THE SECRET COMMITTEE.

No. 1.

No. 2.

No. 3.

No. 4.



* * For the explanation see the next page.

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EXPLANATION OF THE PIKES, OR BATTLE
AXES.

- No. 1. A. The Blade 9 Inches and a half.
B. Socket for the insertion of a staff.

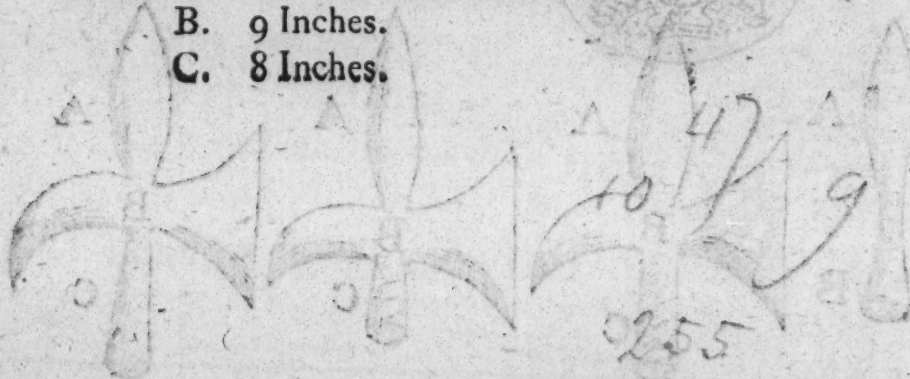
Fourteen finished, at the house of Robert Watt, Merchant ;
two in the house of Robert Orrick ; eighteen unfinished in
ditto.

- No. 2. A. 10 Inches.
B. 6 Inches.
C. Screw, 6 Inches and a half.

The Screw is adapted for a Female Screw, on a staff 3
feet and a half long. The other screws are of the same di-
mensions.

- No. 3. A. 12 Inches.
B. 8 Inches and a half
C. 2 Inches.

- No. 4. A. 10 Inches and a half.
B. 9 Inches.
C. 8 Inches.





AUTHENTIC
NARRATIVE, &c.

NO sacrifices can be too great for the preservation of liberty, without which all other possessions are no longer valuable. There is no word admitting of more various significations, or that has made more different impressions upon the human mind, than liberty. This name we find arbitrarily annexed to the several forms of governments, according with the respective sentiments, customs, and inclinations of different people. It is necessary that limits should be prescribed even to virtue itself; and it is unquestionably true, that political liberty does not consist in an absolute exemption from restraint, because, in civilized society, every individual necessarily surrenders a portion of his own personal freedom, for the purpose of contributing to such salutary regulations as are calculated to establish good order in the whole community. There must be gradations in society, since the natural and acquired qualifications and talents of men dispose them to exertion in an infinite diversity of occupations and pursuits; and therefore the idea of introducing a system of equality among a people, can only exist in the wild imagination of visionary theorists.

In those parts of the globe, to which civilization has not yet been extended, we find the rude and uncultivated inhabitants instructed by the mere force of natural reason, in the necessity of making a sacrifice of their individual independ-

ence to the welfare of the communities, of which they are component parts ; to age and experience, gravity of manners, integrity of character, courage, fortitude, benevolence of mind, the love of justice, or to some other real or supposed superiority, the multitude are induced, from prudent and wise considerations of their own happiness, to yield obedience and respect ; and authority, thus delegated, is only resisted, even among savage nations, when the resumption of it is justified by an abuse of power.

The object of the law is to promote and secure private happiness and the public welfare ; and therefore true liberty may be defined to exist in the right of doing whatever is not prohibited by the law ; but if acts inimical to the law were to be allowed, liberty would be no more ; for every man would then insist upon the right of exercising the same power, thereby revoking the reciprocal contracts entered into between man and man, for the preservation of public tranquillity, and at once annihilating all distinction between a well-ordered community, wherein every member contributes his due proportion towards the advantage of the whole, and a people among whom the means of private gratification supersede every motive to the establishment and maintenance of regulations calculated for general happiness.

The very word society implicates the idea of order ; but as no order can exist where there is no controlling power, there can be no government where all men live upon terms of equality. To suppose a society founded on the principle of equality, may amuse the solitary speculatist ; but the practicability of so fanciful an institution will scarcely be insisted upon, till the truly arduous task is accomplished, of proving the possibility of subduing the passions, and extirminating the frailties, characteristic of humanity.

However different their sentiments upon other topics, all parties are agreed as to the expediency of a reform in parliamentary representation. In this there is an inequality, constituting the most prominent defect in the British constitution. The great difficulty seems to consist in the mode of administering a remedy adequate to the removal of the disease, but, at the same time, not tending to afford an opportunity to disaffected people, to throw the country into confusion by surprize.

There is no legal and constitutional mode, by which a reform in parliamentary representation can be effected but by an application to the house of commons.

The

The lords cannot interfere with, or in any case disturb the privileges of the commons ; nor is the king, in virtue of his royal prerogative, competent to interpose between the constituent and representative bodies.

We see dispersed throughout the kingdom, even in places most distant from the metropolis, and in the most obscure neighbourhoods, numerous political clubs, formed for holding a regular correspondence with each other, all submitting to the same orders and regulations, and all having the same *ostensible* object in view.

Let us inquire into the origin of these associations, which have been divided and subdivided, till their numbers, at length, exceed the powers of probable computation. Upon a repeal of the Test Act being brought under the consideration of parliament, some meetings were held in different parts of the kingdom, in many of which sufficient proofs occurred of a restlessness and turbulency of temper, and a disposition controul and over-rule the deliberations of the senate. An association was formed, under the countenance and patronage of several of the most respectable and exalted characters in the nation, for bringing about a parliamentary reform ; but the unfavourable temper of the times convinced the calm and dispassionate members of this association of the expediency of relinquishing the project, till the arrival of a more auspicious season. The association was not dissolved, but was adjourned from time to time, not seeming to have the immediate attainment of any specific object in view ; but at length propositions came to be made, of a tendency so different from the principle on which the members of the meeting had been originally convened, and were supported with so much heat and intemperance, as to induce those, most distinguished for their rank, property, and attachment to constitutional liberty, to withdraw their names. This secession was, perhaps, hastened by another motive. It was not altogether reputable for men of unblemished integrity to act in conjunction with some characters, who had intruded themselves into this society.

Some persons of true respectability remained ; men highly respectable in private life, but unfortunately yielding to the blind influence of ungovernable party rage. Persons of all descriptions were invited to unite themselves with this society ; and to secure large assemblies every stratagem was practised that ingenuity could devise, it being supposed, and very naturally, that the sanction of numbers would give weight, authority, and consequence to the resolutions of the club. Other institutions of the same nature, but under different

rent appellations, were formed, and by separating themselves into numberless divisions, academies were opened in every part of the kingdom, for instructing grown gentlemen in the *polite* and FASHIONABLE accomplishment of political disputation. Messengers have been constantly employed, for many months together, in searching out and hiring spacious rooms, for accommodating *practical* statesmen, and those only yet in training. This is a serious misfortune to the dancing masters, who are obliged to submit to a very exorbitant advance in the hire of rooms, to give their weekly *hops* in, and a considerable part of the time of the people in this profession is employed in *dancing* from place to place to procure rooms for assembling their youthful pupils at the usual times of school vacation.—To such an extent is political monopoly arrived ! We have even seen Mendoza driven from his pugilistical theatre in Capel-court, to make way for the exhibition of a most curious and superb assemblage of embryo ministers, ambassadors, financiers, commissioners, secretaries, governors, lord lieutenants, paymasters, and receivers general, judges, privy counsellors, dukes, earls, viscounts, barons ; and, in short, people not only completely qualified for all public employments, but also able and willing, after the fatigues of the shop and counting house, gratuitously to undertake the management of state affairs, by way of evening amusement. We have manufactories for statesmen, and warehouses where they may be picked and culled, ready-made and dry. If it be asked, where these phenomena were engendered, the answer is easy.—In the hot bed of sedition.

Under the plausible pretext of effecting a reform in parliamentary representation, it is manifest beyond the possibility of all doubt or controversy, that a very dangerous and formidable combination of wicked and daring spirits were busily employed in bringing to maturity a most horrid and detestable scheme, calculated to plunge this country into a state of anarchy, confusion, massacre, and blood-shed. It was artfully held out to the world, that the object in view was to obtain a parliamentary reform, by legal and constitutional means, and great numbers of well-meaning people, from the middling and lower classes of the community, contributed their endeavours for the attainment of so desirable an end. But this was not the object of pursuit : it was a delusive stratagem, through the medium of which the poison of anti-monarchical and republican principles was to be instilled into the minds of the people, who were intended to be made the instruments of subverting the

the very foundations of the finest superstructure of government in the known world.

Consider the characters and situations in life of the people having the management and superintendency of the cabalistical meetings, in the various parts of the kingdom, and judge to what end all their abominable machinations were directed. Having inspired numerous bodies of uninformed and unthinking people with the most preposterous notions of pretended abuses in the administration of public affairs, it next became necessary, by a very easy transition, to persuade people, thus artfully prepared to receive wrong impressions, that they were called upon by a regard to their own welfare, that of their fellow-subjects, and of posterity, by force and violence to seize upon the executive administration, and establish a new and unheard of order of things.

In the numerous publications of this faction, subdivided into new factions, we behold sentiments and principles daringly disseminated, of a nature exactly according with those which prevail in that hideous assembly of sanguinary and domineering monsters, called the Jacobin Club, at Paris. Of this Jacobin Club little need be said here, since an ample account of the dreadful train of its proceedings, together with the characters of the arrogant, turbulent, rapacious, and blood-thirsty tyrants, of whom it is composed, and those of the French convention, is given in a work, lately published, by General Dumourier, formerly commander in chief of the armies of the French republic.

Having mentioned the Memoirs written by General Dumourier, we shall here give an extract from that interesting work, explanatory of the author's idea of the nature of governments in general.

“ All the nations of Europe must be sensible, that their most important interests are involved in the catastrophe of the French revolution. If the belligerent powers should re-establish the monarchy, the vengeance of the nobles, and consequent proscriptions, will fall on the greater part of the people. But, as the people are fortunately the most numerous body, as they have enjoyed the blessings of liberty, and felt the advantage of holding the sovereign power in their own hands, the triumph of the nobility and clergy will be but momentary; it will endure no longer than while the foreign troops are enabled to support their pretensions.

“ Fresh rebellions may be expected every day; and another revolution, more terrible than the present, may restore the people

ple to the exercise of the sovereignty. But if, by the imbecility of the allied powers, the national convention and the Jacobins are enabled to maintain the republic, then will their system of fraternization be exercised with irresistible force ; and finally, not only the neighbouring nations, but the most distant countries will imitate the rebellion of France, and all Europe be reduced to a state of anarchy and confusion, while by a grand and rapid revolution, the existing governments of the world will be hastening to an end. There is a just medium, however, which the sensible part of the French nation eagerly desire to be adopted, and which would assure general tranquillity to Europe : and this is the establishment of a limited monarchy in France.

“ It is become the duty of the sovereigns of Europe to direct their efforts to the attainment of this end ; and it is only by so doing that they can secure the safety of the monarch who shall mount the throne of France. It is the only bond of universal peace.

“ Admitting that the ancient monarchy cannot be restored in France, it is certain the species of democracy, which exists there at present, cannot be of long duration.

“ Too much reliance has been given to abstract notions on this important matter, which may be easily reduced to a few simple truths. There is no political constitution which will not render a people happy, if it be the choice of the people, and if the government be enabled to act without any other restraint than that of the law.

“ A monarchical government is exclusively suited to large and populous nations, because such only are enabled to provide for the expences of monarchy. The republican form is better suited to small and poor countries, because it is administered with less expence. In the former, there is a unity of power, which constitutes the perfection of government ; and it also includes secrecy and promptitude, without which great and complicated affairs cannot be successfully conducted. Aristocracy is necessary in a republic ; drawing together the authorities that otherwise would be without union, and excluding the tyranny that results from the arbitrary will of a people governing themselves. Pure democracy will always produce an inconsistent and ineffectual government, because it neither admits of union of opinions, nor of prudence, promptitude, nor secrecy ; and includes in itself principles that beget disorders among, and are entirely subversive of the happiness of the people.

“ Whether

“ Whether ancient or modern, all the known republics have been meliorated by aristocracy. We must not even except Athens, which was devoid of success and splendour, excepting when its councils were directed by Aristides, Themistocles, Cymon and Pericles ; and was reduced to slavery, at first by Sparta, and afterward by Philip of Macedon, when the democracy triumphed, and when its affairs were no longer conducted by celebrated men.

“ The extent of our commerce, our wealth, our luxuries, the civilization of our manners, in a word, all the enjoyments on which are founded the splendour and happiness of our age, are opposed to the establishment of a republic. If we will have a perfect equality among men for the basis of our political union, we must go back to the simplicity of the first ages, cast away our advantages, and return to a state of nature. A government founded on equality can be nothing more than the contract of a savage people, for the first time assembled in society.

“ In this respect the French have been guilty of an unaccountable error. They compare themselves to the ancient Romans ; but Brutus in freeing Rome from the Tarquins who were detestable tyrants, and in abolishing royalty, was better informed of the interests of men, than to establish equality and democracy. He preserved the royal authority, while he divided it between two consuls, to whom he left the Lictors, the Fasces, and the axe, as well as all the real attributes of royalty. He new modelled the sovereign power, by ordaining that the hands which held it should be changed every year. Yet the consuls were taken from the senate, that is to say, from the aristocracy. Afterwards indeed, new changes took place in the government, when bold plebians attacked the privileges of the senate by their decemvirs and tribunes. But the government remained five hundred years an aristocracy ; and, when people had made innovations, if the senate had not conceived the sublime policy of rendering the Roman people a nation of conquerors, its government would have resembled that which we have seen since in the republic of Florence : a way feeble, always agitated by civil wars, and open to the invasion of every ambitious neighbour, Rome would have been conquered, or would have become a dower, or a heritage like Florence ; and scarcely would history have spoken of that city, which her aristocracy rendered the most celebrated of the universe.

“ That species of a republic founded by Brutus may be considered as a mixed government ; extending only over a
small

small territory, it would have been impossible to have re-established a system of this kind, after the death of Cæsar, or Tiberius, or Nero. The circumstances of the Roman empire, at that period, would have destroyed the republican spirit in its birth. The bounds of the empire were too much enlarged; the Romans were too rich; luxury, arts, and all the enjoyments that spring from them, had spread their influence too much to accord with the austerity of a republic. Liberty does not necessarily demand a republican government. England is a proof, that a people may be free under a monarch. Liberty consists in being free from obedience to all laws but those that the people themselves have made. The law is the sanctuary in which the sovereignty resides; and kings, or other magistrates to whom the executive power is delegated, being subject to the law, the people are as free as they can be consistently with their happiness. Such are the bounds of true liberty, and all beyond is anarchy." [See Dr. Moore's Memoirs of Dumourier, just published by J. Walker Paternoster-Row. price 3s. Boards.]

The reader will be but too plainly convinced that a very daring conspiracy was formed for the subversion of the constitution of this country, and for establishing in the place thereof a system of anarchy, similar to that adopted in France. But providentially this destructive scheme was discovered in time to be completely defeated by the wholesome provisions of the legislature.

We have abstained from saying any thing with respect to the particular charges exhibited against the unfortunate persons under commitment for reasonable and seditious practices, conceiving it uncandid to attempt the prejudication of their cause. However, from the preceeding papers, and the annexed reports from the Secret Committee of the house of commons, together with the appendix to those reports, the reader will have ample materials whereon to found his opinion.



R E P O R T, &c.

The COMMITTEE to whom the several Papers referred to in His Majesty's Message of the 12th of May, 1794, and which were presented (sealed up) to the House, by Mr. Secretary Dundas, upon the 12th and 13th days of the said Month, by his Majesty's Command, were referred; and who were directed to examine the Matters thereof, and report the same, as they should appear to them, to the House, have proceeded, in obedience to the Orders of the House, to the Consideration of the Matters referred to them:

THEY find, on the first inspection, that the books and papers which they are directed to examine contain a full and authentic account of certain proceedings of two societies, calling themselves the Society for Constitutional Information, and the London Corresponding Society, who appear to be closely connected with other Societies, in many parts of Great Britain, and in Ireland; and the committee also observe, from recent circumstances, which have already come under their observation, that these proceedings appear to become every day more and more likely to affect the internal peace and security of these kingdoms, and to require, in the most urgent manner, the immediate and vigilant attention of parliament.

The committee have, therefore, thought it their indispensable duty, in the first instance, to submit to the house the general view which they have been enabled to form of these transactions,

transactions, reserving a more particular statement for a subsequent report.

In the book, containing the proceedings of the Society for Constitutional Information, which was found in the custody of the person acting as secretary to the society, there are regular entries of what passed on each day of meeting, from the end of the year 1791 to the 9th day of May, in the present year.

From these it appears, that during almost the whole of that period, and with hardly any considerable interval, except during part of the summer in 1792 and 1793, this society has by a series of resolutions, publications, and correspondence, been uniformly and systematically pursuing a settled design, which appears to your committee to tend to the subversion of the established constitution, and which has of late been more openly avowed and attempted to be carried into full execution.

The principles on which this design is founded are strongly and unequivocally proved, from resolutions formed as early as the 18th of May 1792, in which the society applaud the intention of publishing a cheap edition of the first and second parts of *The Rights of Man*; and resolve, "That a copy of Mr. Paine's letter [informing them of this intention] together with these resolutions, be transmitted to all the "associated societies in town and country; and that this society do congratulate them on the firm as well as orderly "spirit and tranquil perseverance manifested in all their proceedings, and exhort them to a steady continuance therein: And also, "That 3000 copies of the letter and resolution "should be printed for the use of the society." This single circumstance would, in the judgment of your committee, leave little doubt of the real nature of the designs entertained by this society. Their conduct, in other respects, has corresponded with it.

On the 11th of May, in the same year, they vote an address, in terms of approbation and applause, to the society of Jacobins at Paris.

They adopt a similar measure, under circumstances still more striking, by sending, on the 9th of November following, an address to the national convention of France, full of panegyric on the French revolution, and expressing the strongest wishes for its progress and success. This address was actually presented at the bar of the convention, by two persons of the name of Barlow and Frost; and the answer of the president

dent was read at the meeting of the society, on the 7th of December 1792.

On the 14th of the same month a letter is received from persons calling themselves the friends of *Liberty* and *Equality*, at Laon, capital of the department de L'Aisne; and referred by the society to their committee of correspondence.

On the 21st of the same month, certain members are expressly appointed a committee for foreign correspondence.

The proceedings of this committee are ordered to be entered in a separate book; and a letter received that day from the friends of liberty and equality at Macon, is referred to that committee.

On the 25th of January, and on the 1st of February, 1793, (at the eve of the commencement of the war, and after the repeated representations which had been made on the part of the British government, complaining of the conduct of France) the citizens Barrere and Roland (then leading members of the French convention) are admitted associated honorary members of the society; and the speeches of Barrere and St. André (also an honorary member of the society) as given in the *Moniteur* of the 4th, 6th, and 7th of January, are directed to be inserted in the books of the society.

Subsequent to the declaration of war, which interrupted this system of direct correspondence and concert with France, and down to the present time, the society have continued, on various occasions, to manifest their attachment to the cause of the French revolution; and have affected to follow, in their proceedings, and in their language, the forms, and even the phrases, which are adopted in that country.

The next leading circumstance, which has engaged the attention of your committee, is the unremitting activity and diligence with which this society have attempted to disseminate their principles, both by publications and resolutions, industriously and extensively circulated, and by endeavouring to establish a general correspondence and concert among the other seditious societies in the metropolis, and in different parts of England and Scotland, as well as in Ireland. With many of these, this society appears itself to have carried on an immediate correspondence, particularly with those of Sheffield, Norwich, and Manchester, who have, on all occasions, taken the most forward and active part in these transactions. In their correspondence with Norwich in particular, as early as the 12th of April, 1793, there is a passage, which so clearly marks the real object which (whatever may have been

their pretexts) they appear uniformly to have had in view, that your committee think it right here to insert it.

Extract of a Letter from the Secretary to the Society for Constitutional Information, to the Secretary to the United Political Societies at Norwich; dated 16th April, 1793.

Where, then, are we to look for the remedy? To that Parliament of which we complain? To the Executive Power, which is implicitly obeyed, if not anticipated in that Parliament; or to ourselves, represented in some Meeting of Delegates for the especial purpose of Reform, which we suppose you understand by the term CONVENTION.

It is the end of each of these propositions that we ought to look to; and as success in a good cause must be the effect of perseverance and the rising reason of the time, let us determine with coolness, but let us persevere with decision.—As to a Convention, we regard it as a plan the most desirable and most practicable, so soon as the great body of the people shall be courageous and virtuous enough to join us in the attempt. Hitherto we have no reason to believe that the moment is arrived for that purpose.—As to any petition to the Crown, we believe it hopeless in its consequences. With respect to the last of the proposals, we are at a loss to advise.—If the event is looked to in the vote which may be obtained from that body to whom this petition is to be addressed, which of us can look to it without the prospect of an absolute negative? In this point of view, therefore, it cannot require a moment's consideration. But if we regard the *policy* of such a petition, it may, in our apprehension, be well worth considering as a warning voice to our present legislators, and as a signal for imitation to the majority of the people. Should such a plan be vigorously and generally pursued, it would hold out a certainty to our fellow countrymen, that we are not a handful of individuals unworthy of attention or consideration, who desire the restoration of the ancient liberties of England; but, on the contrary, it might bring into light that host of well-meaning men, who, in the different towns and counties of this realm, are silently, but seriously anxious, for Reformation in the Government.

We exhort you with anxiety to pursue your laudable endeavours for the common good, and never to despair of the public cause.

But of all the societies with which they corresponded, the two of the greatest importance are, the London Corresponding Society (which has been already referred to, and with whom, during this whole period; the correspondence appears to have been continually kept up) and the assembly, which called itself the British Convention, at Edinburgh. The first of these it will be necessary for the committee to advert to particularly. The proceedings of the second are already sufficiently notorious. It is therefore only necessary to add, that, on the meeting of the Constitutional Society, on the 25th of October last, after their adjournment for the summer, a letter was read from the secretary of the Convention of the Friends of the People

people at Edinburgh, to the secretary of the Corresponding Society—in consequence of which it was resolved, that there should be an extraordinary general meeting, to consider of sending delegates to a convention of delegates of the different societies in Great Britain, to be held at Edinburgh, for the purpose of obtaining a parliamentary reform.

On the Monday following, the 28th of October, this meeting took place. Two delegates were chosen, and the following instructions given them :

The delegates are instructed, on the part of this society, to assist in bringing forward and supporting any constitutional measures for procuring a real representation of the commons of Great Britain in parliament. That in specifying the redress to be demanded of existing abuses, the delegates ought never to lose sight of the two essential principles—general suffrage and annual representation, together with the unalienable right in the people to reform. And that a reasonable and known compensation ought to be made to the representatives of the nation, by a national contribution.

That the delegates do punctually correspond with the society, for the purpose of communicating information, and of receiving further instructions, as the exigency may require.

And it was further resolved,

That this society be desired to write to the different societies with which this society is in correspondence, informing them that the London Corresponding Society, together with this society, have elected delegates to the Convention of delegates to meet at Edinburgh on the 29th instant ; and to request their concurrence in this important measure.

The delegate appears, according to the instructions, to have corresponded with the secretary of the society ; but no resolutions are entered on the subject, till the 17th of January, subsequent to the apprehension and trial of several of the members of the Convention at Edinburgh. On that day the society passed the following resolutions :

Resolved, That law ceases to be an object of obedience whenever it becomes an instrument of oppression.

Resolved, That we call to mind, with the deepest satisfaction, the merited fate of the infamous Jeffries, once lord chief justice of England, who, at the æra of the glorious revolution, for the many iniquitous sentences which he had passed, was torn to pieces by a brave and injured people.

Resolved, That those who imitate his example deserve his fate.

Resolved, That the Tweed, though it may divide countries, ought not and does not make a separation between those principles of common severity in which Englishmen and Scotchmen are equally interested ; that injustice in Scotland is injustice in England ; and that the safety of Englishmen is endangered whenever their brethren in Scotland,

land, for a conduct which entitles them to the approbation of all wise, and the support of all brave men, are sentenced to Botany Bay ; a punishment hitherto inflicted only on felons.

Resolved, That we see with regret, but we see without fear, that the period is fast approaching, when the liberties of Britons must depend not upon reason, to which they have long appealed, nor on their powers of expressing it, but on their firm and undaunted resolution to oppose tyranny by the same means by which it is exercised.

Resolved, That we approve of the conduct of the British Convention, who, though assailed by force, have not been answered by arguments, and who, unlike the members of a certain assembly, have no interest distinct from the common body of the people.

Resolved, That a copy of the above resolutions be transmitted to citizen Skirving, secretary to the British Convention, who is now imprisoned under colour of law in the Tolbooth of Edinburgh.

Subsequent to this period the books of the society are full of repeated declarations of approbation and attachment, addressed to Muir, Palmer, Skirving, Margarot, and Gerald, the persons recently convicted of sedition by the court of justiciary in Scotland ; and of the most violent and inflammatory attacks on the proceedings of that court.

Your committee have thus far traced separately some of the leading proceedings of this society, as appearing from the entries in their own books. Before they take notice of those of a more recent date, and which are, in the present moment, of more immediate importance, it becomes necessary to give an account of the other society, called the London Corresponding Society, because the measures which have been adopted during the last six weeks appear to have been the result of a more particular and intimate concert between the two societies.

It appears, from the evidence before your committee, that the London Corresponding Society meets occasionally in a body, but that its ordinary meetings are in separate divisions in different parts of the town ; that the number of these divisions has been gradually increasing ; and that there are now about thirty of them established. That there is a secretary to each division, another to the whole body, and a general committee formed from one member of each division. That when the society originally met (which is stated to have been in 1792) it consisted of about two hundred persons, but that in about six months it had considerably increased, and it was agreed that it should divide itself into ten different divisions ; that afterwards it was the plan, that when the numbers of any division amounted to more than thirty, they should divide themselves again. That this has not been strictly adhered to ; but nevertheless, in some instances, several separate divisions

divisions have been formed out of one. One of these divisions is said now to consist of six hundred persons, and the number of the others to be various.

It farther appears, that this society has been in the habit of corresponding with the societies in the country, particularly at Sheffield, Manchester, Bristol, Coventry, Nottingham, Derby, Leicester, Norwich, Birmingham, Leeds, Newcastle upon Tyne, Royston, York, Hereford, Edinburgh, and different societies in Scotland.

This society appears likewise, in the course of the year 1792, to have presented an address to the French convention, of a nature similar to that from the Society for Constitutional Information, and to have communicated it to this latter society, in whose book it is entered.

The committee are not enabled to lay before the house a connected statement of the proceedings of the Corresponding Society, from the time of its institution, as the committee are not in possession of any regular journal of them. But they think it right here to insert a *printed* paper, which was found in the custody of the secretary of the society, and contains an address stated to have been agreed upon at a general meeting of this society, on the 20th of January last.

[The following is a copy of the said printed paper.]

At a General Meeting of the London Corresponding Society, held at the Globe Tavern, Strand, January, 1794, Citizen John Martin in the Chair, the following Address to the People of Great Britain and Ireland was read and agreed to:

CITIZENS,

We find the nation involved in a war, by which, in the course of ONE campaign, immense numbers of our countrymen have been slaughtered; a vast expence has been incurred, our trade, commerce, and manufactories, are almost destroyed, and many of our manufacturers and artists are ruined, and their families starving.

To add to our affliction, we have reason to expect, that other taxes will soon be added to the intolerable load of imposts and impositions with which we are already overwhelmed; for the purpose of defraying the expences which have been incurred, in a fruitless crusade, to re-establish the odious despotism of France.

When we contemplate the principles of this war, we confess ourselves to be unable to approve it, as a measure, either of justice or discretion;—and if we are to form our calculation of the result, from what has already passed, we can only look forward to defeat and the eternal disgrace of the British name.

While we are thus engaged in an expensive and ruinous foreign war, our state at home is not less deplorable.

We

We are every day told, by those persons who are interested in supporting the *corruption* list, and an innumerable host of *sinecure* placemen, that the constitution of England is the perfection of human wisdom; that our laws (we should rather say, *THEIR* laws) are the perfection of justice; and that *their* administration of those laws is so impartial and so ready, as to afford an equal remedy, both to the rich and to the poor; by means of which, we are said to be placed in a state of absolute freedom, and that our rights and liberties are so well secured to us as to render all invasion of them impossible.

When we ask, how we enjoy these transcendent privileges, we are referred to *MAGNA CHARTA*, and the *BILL OF RIGHTS*; and the glorious *REVOLUTION*, in the year 1688, is held out to us, as the bulwark of British liberty.

CITIZENS,

We have referred to *Magna Charta*, to the *Bill of Rights*, and to the *Revolution*, and we certainly do find, that our ancestors did establish wise and wholesome laws; but we as certainly find, that, of the venerable constitution of our ancestors, hardly a vestige remains.

The only chapters of the great charter, which are now in legal existence, are the 14th and 19th.

The important provision of the 14th chapter runs thus:

A freeman shall not be amerced for a small fault, but after the manner of the fault; and for a great fault after the greatness thereof, saving to him his contenement; and a merchant likewise, saving to him his merchandize; and any other's villain than ours shall be likewise amerced, saving to him his wainage; and none of the said amerciaments shall be assessed, but by the oath of honest and lawful men of the vicinage.

But by the usurped power of the judges, in assessing fines (and what fines!) in the cases of misdemeanour, this glorious right of the subject, of having these fines assessed by the jury, (the only possible protection from slavery and the vilest oppression) is unjustly and infamously ravished from us.

The provision of the 29th chapter runs thus:

No freeman shall be taken or imprisoned, or be disseised of his freehold, or liberties, or free customs, or be outlawed, or exiled, or any otherwise destroyed, nor we will not pass upon him, nor condemn him, but by the lawful judgment of his peers, or by the law of the land. We will sell to no man, we will not deny, or defer to any man, either justice or right.

The various methods now in constant practice, by which the benefits of this provision are totally defeated and destroyed, might induce us to suppose, that the *GREAT CHARTER* has been repealed; if we did not assuredly know, that it is the fundamental basis of our constitution; which even the *REAL* representatives of the people (much less the miserable nominees of *HELSTONE* and *OLD SARUM*) have not the right, nor (as we trust it will be found by experience) the *POWER* to repeal. Yet what do we find in practice? Unconstitutional and illegal *INFORMATIONs EX OFFICIO*, that is, the arbitrary will of the king's attorney-general usurping the office of the *ACCUSING* jury; and the interested oath of a vile common informer, with the judgment of as vile a common trading or pensioned justice, substituted in the room of our birth-right, an impartial trial by our country.

Add

Add to this, that the exorbitant expence of judicial proceedings, the novel practice of arbitrarily and repeatedly annulling the verdicts of juries, and the dilatory practice of the courts, most openly and shamefully contradict the clause which forbids the denial, the delay, and the sale of justice.

A man accused of **FELONY** (for which, by the common law of England, his life and goods are forfeited) may be bailed, on finding two sureties for forty pounds each; but, upon a charge of **MISDEMEANOUR** by *words* only, bail to the amount of **ONE THOUSAND POUNDS** has been demanded.

Upon conviction also, for such misdemeanour, enormous fines, long and cruel imprisonments, unknown to our ancient laws, and unsanctioned by any new statutes, have of late (and but of late) been too frequently and too oppressively inflicted. And all this, although by this bill of rights it is declared, that "excessive bail shall not be demanded, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted."

If we look to **IRELAND**, we find that acknowledged privilege of the people, to meet for the support and protection of their rights and liberties, is attempted, by terror, to be taken away by a late infamous act of parliament; whilst titles of honour—no, but of dishonour—are lavished, and new sources of corruption opened, to gratify the greedy prostitution of those, who are the instruments of this oppression.

In **SCOTLAND**, the wicked hand of power has been impudently exerted, without even the wretched formality of an act of parliament. Magistrates have forcibly intruded into the peaceful and lawful meetings of freemen, and, by force, (not only without law, but against law) have, under colour of magisterial office, interrupted their deliberations, and prevented their association.

The wisdom and good conduct of the **BRITISH CONVENTION**, at Edinburgh, has been such, as to defy their bitterest enemies to name the law which they have broken; notwithstanding which their papers have been seized, and made use of as evidence against them, and many virtuous and meritorious individuals have been, as cruelly as unjustly, for their virtuous actions, disgraced and destroyed by infamous and illegal sentences of transportation. And these unjust and wicked judgments have been executed with a rancour and malignity never before known in this land; our respectable and beloved fellow-citizens have been cast **FETTERED** into dungeons, amongst felons, in the Hulks, to which they were not sentenced.

CITIZENS:

We all approve the sentiments, and are daily repeating the words, for which these our respectable and valuable brethren are thus unjustly and inhumanly suffering. We, too, associate in order to obtain a fair, free, and full representation of the people, in a house of real national representatives. Are we also willing to be treated as **FELONS**, for claiming this our inherent right, which we are determined never to forego but with our lives, and which none but thieves and traitors can wish to withhold from us? Consider, it is one and the same corrupt and corrupting influence, which, at this time, domineers in Ireland, Scotland, and England. Can you believe, that those who send virtuous Irishmen and Scotchmen fettered, with felons, to Botany Bay, do not meditate, and will not attempt, to seize the first moment to send us after them? Or, if we had not just cause to apprehend the

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same

same inhuman treatment; if, instead of the most imminent danger, we were in perfect safety from it, should we not disdain to enjoy any liberty or privilege whatever, in which our honest Irish and Scotch brethren did not equally and as fully participate with us? Their cause, then, and ours is the same; and it is both our duty and interest to stand or fall together. The Irish parliament, and the Scotch judges, actuated by the same English influence, have brought us directly to the point. There is no farther step beyond that which they have taken. We are at issue. We must now choose at once either liberty or slavery for ourselves and our posterity. Will you wait till BARRACKS are erected in every village, and till *subsidized* Hessians and Hanoverians are upon us?

You may ask, perhaps, by what means shall we seek redress?

We answer, that men in a state of civilized society are bound to seek redress of the grievances from the laws, as long as any redress can be obtained by the laws. But our common master, whom we serve (whose law is a law of liberty, and whose service is perfect freedom) has taught us not to expect to gather grapes from thorns, nor figs from thistles. We must have redress from our own laws, and not from the laws of our plunderers, enemies, and oppressors.

THERE IS NO REDRESS FOR A NATION CIRCUMSTANCED AS WE ARE, BUT IN A FAIR, FREE, AND FULL REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE.

RESOLVED, That during the ensuing session of parliament, the general committee of this society do meet daily, for the purpose of watching the proceedings of the parliament, and of the administration of the government of this country: And that upon the first introduction of any bill, or motion, inimical to the liberties of the people, such as, for **LANDING FOREIGN TROOPS IN GREAT BRITAIN or IRELAND**, for suspending the **HABEAS CORPUS ACT**, for proclaiming **MARTIAL LAW**, OR FOR **PREVENTING THE PEOPLE FROM MEETING IN SOCIETIES** for **CONSTITUTIONAL INFORMATION**, or any **OTHER INNOVATION** of a similar nature, that, on any of these emergencies, the general committee shall issue summonses to the delegates of each division, and also to the secretaries of the different societies affiliated and corresponding with this society, forthwith to call a **GENERAL CONVENTION** of the **PEOPLE**, to be held at such place, and in such manner, as shall be specified in the summons, for the purpose of taking such measures into their consideration.

Resolved, That the preceding address and resolution be signed by the chairman, and printed and published.

J. MARTIN, Chairman.
T. HARDY, Secretary.

COMMITTEE ROOM, January 23, 1794.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY,

That a hundred thousand copies of the address to the people of Great Britain and Ireland, voted at the general meeting, be printed, and distributed by the society,

Resolved Unanimously, That the following toasts, drank at the anniversary

anniversary dinner of the society, be printed at the end of the address:

I. THE RIGHTS OF MAN; and may Britons never want spirit to assert them.

II. *The British Convention*, lately held at Edinburgh; and success to the important object it had in view.

III. *Citizen William Shirvin*, charged by the sentence of the court of justiciary, with the honour of being the cause of calling that convention.

IV. *The London Corresponding Society*, and other patriotic societies of Great Britain and Ireland.

V. *Citizen Maurice Margat*, the condemned delegate of this society; and may his manly and patriotic conduct be rewarded by the attachment of the people.

Citizen Gerrald then arose, and in a stream of inspiring eloquence, pronounced the just eulogium of this truly valuable citizen, so emphatically called by *Citizen Aitchison* (one of the witnesses on his trial) the SECOND SIDNEY. He concluded with wishing we might rather die the last of British freemen, than live the first of slaves.

VI. *Citizen Joseph Gerrald*, the other delegate of this society, now under prosecution; and may his concluding sentiment be engraved upon every British heart.

VII. The transactions at *Toulon*. May Britons remember them as they ought, and profit by dear-bought experience.

VIII. *Citizen Hamilton Rowan*, and the other true patriots of Ireland; and may the authors of the *Conventional-bill* find that they have committed a bull.

IX. *Citizens Muir and Palmer*—May their sentence be speedily reversed, and *Botany-Bay* be peopled with a colony of real criminals.

X. Success to the arms of freedom against whomsoever directed; and confusion to despots with whomsoever allied.

XI. All that is good in every constitution; and may we never be superstitious enough to reverence in any that which is good for nothing.

XII. *Citizen Thomas Paine*—May his virtues rise superior to calumny and suspicion, and his name still be dear to Britons.

XIII. *Lord Loughborough*, the *Earl of Moira*, *Sir Gilbert Elliot*, and the other apostates form liberty; and may they enjoy the profits of their apostacy so long as they live.

XIV. A speedy and honourable peace with the brave republic of France.

XV. The starving manufacturers and neglected peasantry of Great Britain and Ireland.

XVI. *Citizen John Frost*, and a speedy restoration of that health which he lost in the dungeons of Newgate.

XVII. The virtuous and spirited citizens, now in confinement for matters of opinion; and may we shew them, by our conduct, that they are not forgotten.

On this paper it appears unnecessary to offer any comment, or to do more than call the attention of the house to the concluding resolution.

On the 27th of March the society sent a letter to the society for constitutional information, to which the committee

also feel it right to call the attention of the house, as it led to the particular concert, already taken notice of, between the two societies, and to the recent measures founded thereupon, which now remain to be taken notice of.

This letter and the resolutions of the two societies in consequence, are stated in a printed paper, which was likewise found in the custody of the secretary of the society, a copy of which is here subjoined. They are also entered in the book of the society for constitutional information.

March 27th, 1794.

To the Secretary of the Society for Constitutional Information.

CITIZEN,

I am directed by the London Corresponding Society to transmit the following resolutions to the Society for Constitutional Information, and to request the sentiments of that society respecting the important measures which the present juncture of affairs seems to require. The London Corresponding Society conceives that the moment is arrived when a full and explicit declaration is necessary from all the friends of freedom. Whether the late illegal and unheard of prosecutions and sentences shall determine us to abandon our cause, or shall excite us to shew a radical reform with an ardour proportioned to the magnitude of the object, and with a zeal as distinguished on our parts as the treachery of others in the same glorious cause is notorious. The Society for Constitutional Information is therefore required to determine whether or no they will be ready, when called upon, to act in conjunction with this and other societies to obtain a fair representation of the people. Whether they concur with us in seeing the necessity of a speedy convention, for the purpose of obtaining, in a constitutional and legal method, a redress of those grievances under which we at present labour, and which can only be effectually removed by a full and fair representation of the people of Great Britain. The London Corresponding Society cannot but remind their friends, that the present crisis demands all the prudence, unanimity, and vigour, that ever was or can be exerted by men or Britons; nor do they doubt but that manly firmness and consistency will finally, and they believe shortly, terminate in the full accomplishment of all their wishes,

I am, fellow citizen,

(In my humble measure)

A friend to the Rights of Man,

T. HARDY, Secretary.

Resolved unanimously,

I. That dear as justice and liberty are to Britons, yet the value of them is comparatively small without a dependence on their permanency; and there can be no security for the continuance of any right but in equal laws.

II. That equal laws can never be expected but by a full and fair representation of the people. To obtain which, in the way pointed out by the constitution, has been and is the sole object of this society. For this we are ready to hazard every thing, and never, but with our lives, will we relinquish an object which involves the happiness, or even the political existence, of ourselves and posterity.

III. That

III. That it is the decided opinion of this society, that to secure ourselves from future illegal and scandalous prosecutions, to prevent a repetition of wicked and unjust sentences, and to recal those wise and wholesome laws that have been wrested from us, and of which scarcely a vestige remains, there ought to be immediately a convention of the people, by delegates deputed for that purpose from the different societies of the friends of freedom assembled in the various parts of this nation. And we pledge ourselves to the public to pursue every legal method speedily to accomplish so desirable a purpose.

It was resolved by the Society for Constitutional Information, That their secretary should assure the London Corresponding Society, that they heartily approved of their intentions, and would co-operate with them in obtaining an object of so much importance to the peace and happiness of society. And that he also request the London Corresponding Society to send a delegation of its members to confer upon the subject, with an equal number of the Society for Constitutional Information.

A meeting of the delegates from the two societies being held, they came to the following resolutions:

Resolved,

First, That it appears to this committee very desirable, that a convention or general meeting of the friends of liberty should be called, for the purpose of taking into consideration the proper methods of obtaining a full and fair representation of the people.

Second, That it be recommended to the Society for Constitutional Information, and London Corresponding Society, to institute a regular and pressing correspondence with all those parts of the country where such measures may be likely to be promoted, not only to instigate the societies already formed, but to endeavour also to produce such other associations as may further the general object.

Third, That it appears to this committee, that the general object would be promoted if a standing committee of co-operation between the two societies were established, for the purpose of holding personal communication with such members of similar societies in other parts of the country, as may occasionally be in London, and who may be authorized by their respective societies to act with such committee.

The above resolutions being reported to the Society for Constitutional Information, it was by them resolved, that the same should be entered on the books as part of the proceedings of the society; and the committee of correspondence was appointed to co-operate with the committee of the London Corresponding Society, in conformity with the third resolution.

It further appears, from correspondence of a recent date between different societies in the country and the secretary of the corresponding society, that some time in the course of a few weeks past, circular letters had actually been sent to different parts of the kingdom, on the subject of assembling a convention, and a printed paper to this effect has been found in the custody of the secretary to the society; which is here inserted, and which your committee have good reason to believe is a copy of the circular letter referred to.

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[The following is a Copy of the said printed Paper.]

CITIZENS!

The critical moment is arrived, and Britons must either assert with zeal and firmness their claims to liberty, or yield without resistance to the chains that ministerial usurpation is forging for them. Will you co-operate with us in the only peaceable measure that now presents itself with any prospect of success? We need not intimate to you that, notwithstanding the unparalleled audacity of a corrupt and overbearing faction, which at present tramples on the rights and liberties of the people, our meeting cannot, in England, be interrupted without the previous adoption of a convention bill; a measure it is our duty to anticipate, that the ties of union may be more firmly drawn, and the sentiments and views of the different societies throughout the nation be compared, while it is yet in our power, so as to guide and direct the future operations of the friends of freedom.—Rouse, then, to one exertion more; and let us shew our consciousness of this important truth—"If we are to be beaten down with threats, prosecutions, and illegal sentences, we are unworthy—we are incapable of liberty." We must, however, be expeditious. Hessians and Austrians are already among us; and if we tamely submit, a cloud of these armed barbarians may shortly be poured in upon us. Let us form, then, another British convention. We have a central situation in our view, which we believe would be most convenient for the whole island; but which we forbear to mention, (entreating your confidence in this particular) till we have the answer of the societies with which we are in correspondence. Let us have your answer, then, by the 20th, at farthest, earlier if possible, whether you approve of the measure, and how many delegates you can send, with the number also, if possible, of your societies.

We remain your's,
in civic affection,

THE LONDON CORRESPONDING SOCIETY.
T. HARDY, Secretary.

For the management of this business we have appointed a secret committee; you will judge how far it is necessary for you to do the same.

Subsequent to the proceedings now stated, there was another general meeting of the Corresponding Society, held at Chalk Farm; the proceedings of which are stated in a printed paper likewise found on the secretary of the society, and which your committee find has been circulated by order of the society.

This Paper is here inserted (as follows):

At a GENERAL MEETING of the London Corresponding Society, held on the Green at Chalk Farm, on Monday, the 14th of April, 1794, J. LOVETT in the Chair, The following Letters were read:

TO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE SOCIETY OF THE FRIENDS
OF THE PEOPLE.

SIR,

AT a crisis so important as the present, there needs no apology on the part of the *London Corresponding Society*, for addressing itself to all
other

other associated societies, who have in view the same object as themselves.

To the *Society of the Friends of the People*, arguments are not wanting to shew the importance and absolute necessity of a full and fair representation of the people of Great Britain. *They* have investigated the subject for themselves; *they* have exposed to the world a series of plain and indisputable facts, which must excite in the minds of every man well disposed to his country, apprehensions of alarm for the security of the few remaining vestiges of liberty, from which, as Britons, we derive consolation.

Deeply impressed with considerations of this nature, the London Corresponding Society earnestly solicits, at this time, the concurrence and assistance of the *Society of the Friends of the People*, in assembling, as speedily as the nature of the business will admit, a convention of the friends of freedom, for the purpose of obtaining, in a legal and constitutional method, a full and effectual representation.

Our request is not made from the impressions of the moment, but after the maturest deliberations on the value and importance of the object for which we are contending, and of the difficulties we may expect from those whose present interests render them more hostile to the welfare of their country.

The opposition of such persons is no small argument for the goodness of our cause; and their late conduct, when compared with their former professions, exhibits a depravity unparalleled, we trust, on the page of history.

Under the auspices of apostate reformers, we have lately beheld serious and alarming encroachments on the liberties of the people.

We have seen with indignation and horror men *legally* and *peaceably* assembled, dispersed by unconstitutional powers, and their papers seized.

We have seen some of our most virtuous brethren, whose only crime has been an imitation of Mr. PITT and his associates, sentenced to fourteen years transportation, without the sanction of law, or even of precedent, of which number, one was held up in the British Parliament as *convicted* and *condemned*, before he was even put upon his trial.

The insidious attempts also to introduce foreign troops into this country, without the consent of parliament, and the intended bill to embody foreigners into his majesty's service, are measures sufficiently calculated to awaken our fears for the existence even of the name of liberty. Nor can we overlook that part of the present system of corruption which maintains, out of the public plunder, a train of spies, more dangerous to society than so many assassins, whose avowed business is to destroy the friends of the country one by one.

These are grievances which demand immediate redress, and when added to those evils which are necessarily connected with every *partial* representation of the people, call for the strenuous exertions of every lover of his country.

But we are told, that the present is not the time for reform, and that innovation may introduce disturbance. Are those persons to judge of the proper time to make a reform, who exist only by corruption? Are the people of Britain to endure every thing without repining, without ardently seeking a radical reform, because disturbances *may* happen? Have the enemies to reform told us whence these disturbances are to originate? Has a single overt act been committed by the friends to freedom? Have not all the riots, all the public disturbances, all the
seditious

sedition assemblies, been excited by the enemies to reform? And do they mean to tell us, that they will still find other instruments for their wicked designs: that they have yet those who will act over again the outrages that have been perpetrated in some parts of Britain, and attempted in others?

If such is the determination of those persons *hostile* to a *fair* representation, *let them look to the consequences*, but let them recollect that it has happened, and may happen again, that those who kindled the flames have perished by them.

The friends to *reform* are friends to *peace*, their principles can be promoted only by peaceable means, they know of no other method of obtaining the object they desire. But they will not be alarmed by the threats of *venal apostates*, they will not draw back because they have seen some of their best friends doomed to exile; they will pursue the course in which they have began, and turn neither to the right nor to the left.

Convinced as the London Corresponding Society is, that there is no power which *ought*, so there is no power which *can* finally withstand the just and steady demands of a people resolved to be free; they will, therefore, look with confidence to the *determination*, and, they hope, to the *co-operation* of the "*Society of the Friends of the People*," in the attainment of an object which involves the dearest interests of society.

Convinced also that their intentions are of the purest kind, they will never stoop to answer the calumnies of their enemies; but will, at all times, and in all circumstances, endeavour, by firmness and perseverance, to deserve the countenance and approbation of the best friends of their country, *the friends of a fair representation of the people of Great Britain.*

I am, Sir,

For the London Corresponding Society,

THOMAS HARDY, Sec.

April 4, 1794.

COMMITTEE ROOMS, Frith-Street, April 11, 1794.

SIR,

YOUR letter of the 4th instant, addressed to Mr. SHERIDAN, chairman of the FRIENDS OF THE PEOPLE, was laid before that SOCIETY at their meeting on Saturday last; and they instructed their committee to thank the LONDON CORRESPONDING SOCIETY for their communication, and to express the alarm they feel in common with every friend of liberty, at the late extraordinary proceedings of government, so ably detailed, and so justly reprobated by your society. They assure you, that all the friends of reform may look with confidence to the determination and co-operation of this Society in every peaceable and constitutional measure, which shall appear to them calculated to promote the object of their institution; but they do not think that which is recommended in your letter, is likely to serve its professed purpose. They fear it will furnish the enemies of reform with the means of calumniating its advocates, and so far from forwarding the cause, will deter many from countenancing that which they approve.—For these reasons, the friends of the people must decline to send delegates to the convention, proposed by the London Corresponding Society:—At the same time, they renew their assurance of good will, and desire of preserving a proper understanding
and

and cordiality among all the friends of parliamentary reform, notwithstanding any difference of opinion that may occur as to the best method of accomplishing it.

In name, and by order of the committee,

(Signed)

W. BRETON, chairman.

To Mr. T. HARDY, *Secretary to the
London Corresponding Society.*

The following RESOLUTIONS were then passed unanimously :

Resolved Unanimously,

I. THAT this society have beheld with rising indignation, proportioned to the enormity of the evil, the late rapid advances of despotism in Britain ; the invasion of public security ; the contempt of popular opinion ; and the violation of all those provisions of the constitution intended to protect the people against the encroachments of power and prerogative.

II. That our abhorrence and detestation have been particularly called forth by the late arbitrary and flagitious proceedings of the court of justiciary in Scotland, where all the doctrines and practices of the *Star Chamber*, in the times of Charles the first, have been *revived* and *aggravated* ; and where sentences have been pronounced in open violation of all law and justice, which must strike deep into the heart of every man, the melancholy conviction that BRITONS ARE NO LONGER FREE.

III. That the whole proceedings of the late British convention of the people, at Edinburgh, are such as claim our approbation and applause.

IV. That the conduct of citizens MARGAROT and GERKALD in particular, by its strict conformity with our wishes and instructions, and the ability, firmness, and disinterested patriotism which it so eminently displayed, has inspired an enthusiasm of zeal and attachment which no time can obliterate, and no prosecution remove ; and that we will preserve their names engraven on our hearts till we have an opportunity to redress their wrongs.

V. That any attempt to violate those yet remaining laws, which were intended for the security of Englishmen against the tyranny of courts and ministers, and the corruption of dependant judges, by vesting in such judges a legislative or arbitrary power (such as has lately been exercised by the court of Justiciary in Scotland) ought to be considered as dissolving entirely the social compact between the English nation and their governors ; and driving them to an immediate appeal to that incontrovertible maxim of eternal justice, *that the safety of the people is the SUPREME, and in cases of necessity, the ONLY law.*

VI. That the arming and disciplining in this country, either with or without the consent of parliament, any band of *emigrants and foreigners, driven from their own country for their known attachment to an INFAMOUS DESPOTISM*, is an outrageous attempt to overawe and intimidate the free spirit of Britons ; to subjugate them to an army of mercenary cut-throats whose views and interest must of necessity be in direct opposition to those of the nation, and that no pretence whatever OUGHT to induce the people to submit to so unconstitutional a measure.

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VII. That

VII. That the unconstitutional project of raising money and troops by forced benevolences (and no benevolences collected upon requisition from the king or his ministers can ever in reality be voluntary) and the equally unjustifiable measure of arming one part of the people against the other, brought Charles the first to the block, and drove James the second and his posterity from the throne ; and that consequently ministers in advising such measures, ought to consider whether they are not guilty of high treason.

VIII. That this society have beheld with considerable pleasure the *consistant respect* which the house of lords displayed for their own constitutional rules and orders, on the fourth of the present month, upon the motion of earl Stanhope, concerning the interference of ministers in the internal government of France ; and that it is the firm conviction of this society, that this circumstance when properly detailed, will have a considerable effect in convincing the country at large, of the true dignity and utility of that branch of his MAJESTY'S PARLIAMENT.

IX. That the thanks of this meeting be given to EARL STANHOPE, for his manly and patriotic conduct during the present session of parliament ; a conduct which (unsupported as it has been in the senate, of which HE is so truly honourable a member) has, together with the timely interference of certain spirited and patriotic associations, been nevertheless already productive of the salutary effect of chasing the Hessian and Hanoverian mercenaries from our coasts ; who, but for these exertions might have been marched perhaps, ere this, into the heart of the country, together with others of their countrymen, to have peopled the BARRACKS, which every where insult the eyes of Britons.

X. That it is the firm conviction of this society, that a steady perseverance in the same bold and energetic sentiments which have lately been avowed by the friends of freedom cannot fail of crowning with ultimate triumph, the virtuous cause in which we are engaged, since whatever may be the intersted opinion of *hereditary* senators, or *packed* majorities of *pretended* representatives, truth and liberty in an age so enlightened as the present, must be invincible and omnipotent.

This Society having already addressed M. Margarot, their Delegate, an ADDRESS to JOSEPH GERRALD was read as follows, and carried unanimously.

To JOSEPH GERRALD, a prisoner sentenced by the High Court of Justiciary of Scotland, to Transportation beyond the Seas for FOURTEEN YEARS !

WE behold in you our beloved and respected friend and fellow-citizen, a martyr to the glorious cause of equal representation, and we cannot permit you to leave this degraded country without expressing the infinite obligations the people at large, and we in particular, owe to you for your very spirited exertions in that cause upon every occasion ; but upon none more conspicuously, than during the sitting of the BRITISH CONVENTION of the PEOPLE at Edinburgh, and the consequent *proceeding* (we will not call it *trial*) at the bar of the court of justiciary.

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We know not which most deserves admiration, the splendid talents with which you are so eminently distinguished; the exalted virtues by which they have been directed; the perseverance and undaunted firmness which you so nobly displayed in resisting the wrongs of your insulted and oppressed country; or your present manly and philosophical suffering under an *arbitrary*, and till of late *unprecedented* sentence: a sentence, one of the most vindictive and cruel that has been pronounced since the days of that *most infamous* and *ever-to-be detested* court of star chamber, the enormous tyranny of which cost the first Charles his head.

To you and to your associates we feel ourselves most deeply indebted. For us it is that you are suffering the sentence of transportation with felons, the vilest outcasts of society! For us it is that you are doomed to the inhospitable shores of New Holland; where, however, we doubt not you will experience considerable alleviation by the remembrance of that *VIRTUOUS CONDUCT* for which it is imposed on you, and by the sincere regard and esteem of your fellow-citizens.

The equal laws of this country have, for ages past, been the boast of its inhabitants: But whither, are they now fled? We are animated by the same sentiments, are daily repeating the same words, and committing the same actions for which you are thus infamously sentenced; and we will repeat and commit them until we have obtained redress; yet we are unpunished! either therefore the law is unjust towards you in inflicting *punishment* on the exertions of *virtue and talents*, or it ought not to deprive us of *our share* in the *GLORY* of the *Martyrdom*.

We again, therefore, pledge ourselves to you and to your country, never to cease demanding our rights from those who have usurped them, until having obtained an equal representation of the people, we shall be enabled to hail you once more with triumph to your native country.—We wish you health and happiness; and be assured we never, never shall forget *your name, your virtues, nor YOUR GREAT EXAMPLE*.

The London corresponding society.

JOHN LOVETT, Chairman.
THOMAS HARDY, Secretary.

The 14th of April, 1794.

It was also unanimously resolved,

I. That the committee of correspondence be directed to convey the approbation of this society—1. To Archibald Hamilton Rowan, prisoner in the Newgate of the city of Dublin, for his unshaken attachment to the people, and for his spirited assertion of their rights.

II. To John Philpot Curran for his admirable and energetic defence of A. H. Rowan, and the principles of liberty, as well as for his patriotic conduct in parliament.

III. To the society of united Irishmen in Dublin, and to exhort them to persevere in their exertions to obtain justice for the people of Ireland.

IV. To Skirving, Palmer and Muir, suffering the same iniquitous sentences, and in the same cause with our delegates.

V. To John Clark, and Alexander Reid, for their so readily and disinterestedly giving bail for our delegates, instigated thereto

solely by their attachment to liberty, uninfluenced by any personal consideration.

VI. To Adam Gillies, Malcolm Laing, and James Gibson, for their able assistance given to Joseph Gerrald, at the bar of the high court of justiciary at Edinburgh.

VII. To felicitate Thomas Walker, of Manchester, and the people at large, on the event of his, as well as several other late trials, and on the development of the infamy of a system of spies and informers.

VIII. To Sir Joseph Mawbey, for his manly conduct at the late surreptitious meeting held at Epsom in Surrey.

It was also unanimously resolved,

That two hundred thousand copies of the proceedings and resolutions of this meeting be printed and published.

J. LOVETT, Chairman.
T. HARDY, Secretary.

Resolved,

That the thanks of this meeting be given to the chairman, for his manly and impartial conduct this day.

T. HARDY, Secretary.

From a review of these transactions your committee feel it impossible not to conclude, that the measures which have been stated are directed to the object of assembling a meeting which, under the name of a general convention, may take upon itself the character of a general representative of the people. However at different periods the term of parliamentary reform may have been employed, it is obvious that the present view of these societies is not intended to be prosecuted by any application to parliament, but, on the contrary, by an open attempt to supersede the house of commons in its representative capacity, and to assume to itself all the functions and powers of a national legislature.

This object, as what is really intended to be attained by assembling a convention, appears expressly and pointedly stated, even as early as the 15th of April, 1793, in the letter to the united societies at Norwich, already referred to; and the same letter sufficiently explains the policy in consequence of which, subsequent to that period, the topic of parliamentary reform has been still ostensibly brought forward in some of the communications which have been made public. As a further illustration of this observation, your committee think it not immaterial to remark, that in a letter from Margarot, at Edinburgh, to the secretary of the society for constitutional information, in December, 1793, it is particularly recommended to him not to introduce politics in his letter, or at *least* nothing but what *concerns reform*. Whatever disguise, however, may have been employed in an earlier period, seems in the later proceedings

ceedings to have been wholly relinquished. The object is still stated to be a fair and equal representation of the people; but a general convention of the people, to be chosen by the delegates of the different societies, is proposed for the purpose of obtaining this end. No mention is made of any application to parliament, or of any amendment of the representation in parliament.

The circular letter, inserted in a former part of this report, recommends forming another British convention, to be held in a central situation most convenient for the whole island; and states the appointment of a secret committee for that purpose.

The third resolution passed by the corresponding society on the 27th of March, and communicated to the society for constitutional information, which was the foundation of the subsequent joint proceedings of the two societies, states the object of the convention to be for the purpose "of securing themselves from future illegal and scandalous prosecutions, to prevent a repetition of wicked and unjust sentences, and to recall those wise and wholesome laws which have been wrested from them." Terms which appear to your committee to be material, not so much on account of their general inflammatory tendency, as because they evidently point at obtaining a redress of supposed grievances, not by application to parliament, but by acts of authority to be exercised by themselves.

The resolutions afterwards passed on the 14th of April, contain open attacks on all the branches of the legislature, and a direct invitation to the people to resist measures then in the contemplation of the legislature; and expressly stating that they ought equally to be resisted, whether adopted with or without the consent of parliament.

When, in addition to these considerations, the committee reflect on the leading circumstances which they have already stated, of the declared approbation, at an early period, of the doctrine of the Rights of Man, as stated in Paine's publications; of the connection and intercourse with French societies, and with the national convention; and, of the subsequent approbation of the French system; and consider that these are the principles which the promoters of a convention evidently make the foundation of all their proceedings; they are satisfied that the design now openly professed and acted upon, aims at nothing less than what is stated in his majesty's message, and must be considered as a traitorous conspiracy for the subversion of the established laws and constitution, and the in-
troduction

trodition of that system of anarchy and confusion which has fatally prevailed in France.

There still remains two points connected with what has been already stated, which your committee have not yet had the opportunity of investigating as fully as they wish, but which appear too important to be wholly passed over.

It appears to your committee, that in some of the societies referred to proposals have been received, and that measures have recently been taken for providing arms to be distributed among the members of the societies.

It also appears, from such information as your committee have hitherto had the opportunity of receiving, that since the apprehension of the persons in whose custody the papers were found which have been referred to your committee, there have been several meetings of the societies in different parts of the metropolis ; that the designs which were before entertained have been by no means abandoned ; and that on the contrary, there have been some indications of a disposition to concert means for forcibly resisting such measures as may be taken for defeating their accomplishment, or for bringing the authors and abettors of them to justice.



SECOND REPORT, &c.

The COMMITTEE to whom the several Papers referred to in His Majesty's Message of the 12th of May, 1794, and which were presented (sealed up) to the House, by Mr. Secretary Dundas, upon the 12th and 13th days of the said Month, by his Majesty's Command, were referred; and who were directed to examine the Matters thereof, and report the same, as they should appear to them, to the House;

HAVE further proceeded in the examination of the books and papers referred to them by the house, and of such other information as they have since obtained.

The latter has consisted of a variety of examinations and depositions taken before the Privy Council, of papers found in the custody of different persons, who have been apprehended, and of accounts received by the secretary of state relative to discoveries made at Edinburgh, and in different parts of Scotland; all which have been laid before your committee.

The result appears to your committee strongly to confirm all the propositions, which they found it their duty, on the outset of their enquiry, to submit to the house, and to leave no doubt of the nature, extent, and malignity of the extravagant designs which have been formed, of the regularity and system with which these designs have been pursued, or of the rapid progress of the measures which had been taken, in order to attempt to carry them speedily into execution.

Before the committee submit to the house such further details as appear necessary to give a general and comprehensive view of the subject, and to shew the origin and progress of the plan which has been in agitation, they think it right to call the attention of the house to some transactions of a recent date, and which appear to be of so much importance as to deserve a separate statement.

The first of these has already been shortly referred to in the former report, and relates to the measures taken for providing arms, to be distributed among the members of the several societies, and for preparing the means of employing actual force in the execution of their project.

The

The circumstance which first came under the observation of your committee, containing a distinct trace of measures of this description, was a letter from a person at Sheffield, by profession a printer (who has since absconded) which was thus addressed: *Citizen Hardy, Secretary of the London Corresponding Society*, and which was found in the possession of Hardy on the 12th day of May last, when he was taken into custody.

The letter is as follows :

Sheffield, April 14, 1794.

Fellow Citizens,

The barefaced aristocracy of the present administration has made it necessary that we should be prepared to act on the defensive against any attack they may command their newly armed minions to make upon us. A plan has been hit upon, and, if encouraged sufficiently, will, no doubt, have the effect of furnishing a quantity of pikes to the patriots, great enough to make them formidable. The blades are made of steel, tempered and polished after an improved form. They may be fixed into any shafts ; but fir ones are recommended, of the girth of the accompanying hoops at the top end, and about an inch more at the bottom. The blades and hoops, more than which cannot be properly sent to any great distance, will be charged one shilling. Money to be sent with the order. As the institution is in its infancy, immediate encouragement is necessary.

Struck through in the Original. | Orders may be sent to the Secretary of the Sheffield Constitutional Society.

Signed.

To prevent post suspicion, direct to [Here follows, in the original, the name of the person to whom the letters were to be addressed, and his residence at Sheffield.]

This letter contained another inclosed, directed to the Secretary of the Norwich Patriotic Societies, which was found in the possession of the Secretary to the London Corresponding Society ; and which is as follows :

Fellow Citizens,

The barefaced aristocracy of the present administration has made it necessary to prepare to act upon the defensive, in case of any attack upon the patriots.

A plan has been formed for carrying into effect this necessary business. Pike blades are made with hoops for the shafts to fit the top ends ; the bottom end of the shafts should be about an inch thicker ; and fir is recommended for the shafts, selected by persons who are judges of wood. The blades and hoops will be sold at the rate of one shilling, properly tempered and polished. The money sent with the orders.

Direct to [Here follows, in the original, the name of the person to whom the letters were to be addressed, and his residence at Sheffield] to prevent the postmaster's suspicion.

Your committee soon after found, that, by the different examinations taken before the Privy Council, it was fully established, that the general idea of procuring arms (either musquets or pikes) to be distributed among the members, had of late been frequently the subject of conversation

versation at different divisions, among the leading members of the Corresponding Society, and among persons who have been most active in the measures lately taken; that although these conversations had frequently taken place, they had generally been after the business of the meetings was closed, and when only a few persons remained. It appears indeed to have been, in a great measure, agreed that this plan was not to be publicly mentioned at the divisions; particularly it was recommended by one of the most active persons not to mention it till the new plan of constitution for the society was settled. And it has appeared (in the course of this investigation), that the arming business was all done by private members, and that it was held not fit to talk of the pikes but to those who were to be trusted; that the general business was done by a Committee of Delegates, but there was a secret Committee of five persons, who transacted what was not to be entrusted to the whole of the Corresponding Society; that they meet at private houses, and that all the correspondence comes to them, and what they think proper is laid before the society. But although this plan of precaution and concealment must have prevented the discovery of a great part of this system, instances have occurred of proceedings at some of the divisions of the Corresponding Society, relative to procuring arms, which your committee have been enabled to ascertain. As early as November 1793, at a meeting of a division of the society, held at a place named to the committee, a violent speech was made by a member of the society, recommending that arms should be procured, and mentioning they were provided with arms and pikes at Sheffield; and another member said it would be good to provide pikes at sixpence each: afterwards, in the month of February last, at a meeting of one of the divisions of the Corresponding Society named to the committee, and at a place ascertained to them, it was proposed to issue new books, with the names and places of abode of the several members; and that the names of those who lived in the same neighbourhood should be placed together, that they might easily be assembled upon any emergency, in case government should attempt to disperse their meetings; and a resolution for this purpose was passed soon after at a subsequent meeting.

At the same meeting a member of another division attended and stated to the chairman that he came to make a report from his division. He stated a rumour that the Habeas Corpus Act would be soon suspended. This intelligence he was deputed to give, that the society at large might be prepared for the event. Upon this a speech was made by a person, who was a member of the committee mentioned in the former report, in which he recommended to each member to provide himself with arms and ammunition, in order to defend himself against any person who might attack him, whether they should be of this country, Prussians, Hessians, or Hanoverians. And in the beginning of April last, at the same division, it appears that a report was made from the general committee, That an answer had been received from the society for Constitutional Information, expressive of their desire to co-operate with them in obtaining their great end, and desiring a deputation might be sent to consult and deliberate with them. In consequence a certain number of the committee were appointed; and on this occasion one of the members recommended to the citizens not to sit tamely silent and inactive, but to rouse themselves, and, not only with words, but arms, assert their rights:—he said, they were on the eve of a general meeting, and they should go with their minds

prepared

prepared to adopt a system which might be reduced to speedy practice, and rescue their fellow citizens (meaning the Scotch delegates) from their degrading situation.

It also appears to your committee that a plan was in contemplation, to subdivide each division into tythings, and to appoint tything men to each, for the purpose "of rendering themselves useful in case of emergency," which was explained to mean, that in case the society should be interrupted by peace officers, or a press-gang, they should resist any such interruption. As another instance of the measures taken to instigate the people to arm, an account was given of a hand bill produced at one of the meetings, which was to the following effect:

The Ins tell us we are in danger of invasion from the French.

The Outs tell us that we are in danger from the Hessians and Hanoverians.

In either case we should arm ourselves—Get arms, and learn how to use them.

Several copies of this hand-bill were proved to have been publicly produced at a meeting of one of the divisions, by a person who said he had printed them for the purpose of distributing as many as possible.

In the progress of the enquiry, information was received from a witness, whose accuracy has since been confirmed in a variety of striking instances, that a person named in the information, an active promoter of these measures, and a delegate of one of the divisions, had shewn the witness a pike in his possession, of which a minute description was given. The witness stated this person to have given an account of the use to which these pikes might be applied; that it was supposed no regiment of horse could stand against them; that such pikes were manufacturing at Sheffield; that he had received from the Secretary of the Corresponding Society the direction of the person from whom he might procure them; that the price was to be one shilling apiece, and, if they cost more, the overplus would be paid by a person at Sheffield, who would be indemnified by the society.

The witness also stated the same person to have given an account of a meeting intended to be held at a public-house (which was named) on a day specified, for the purpose of fixing the number of pikes to be sent for. The person stated to have held this conversation, and another person said to have been present at it (who was also one of the most active members of the London Corresponding Society) were soon after apprehended, and a pike exactly answering to the description given by the witness was found upon each of them. In the subsequent investigation of the business, your committee have received strong confirmation of the principal circumstances of the conversation stated by the witness, respecting the use to which the pikes might be applied, the direction given by the secretary of the Corresponding Society in order to procure them from Sheffield, the price to be paid for them, and the intended meeting for the purpose of fixing the number to be sent for, and of depositing one shilling apiece for the purchase. One of the persons so apprehended, in explaining the use to be made of the pikes from Sheffield, said, the persuasion was, and he himself believed, the government were conspiring against the people, and therefore should be resisted. Another witness has since stated, that he had understood from one of the persons apprehended, that his pike was to be used (in case the people were to rise) for the particular purpose of keeping off the cavalry.

Your

Your committee, in the course of this examination, observed, that an account was given of some supposed meeting of military divisions, connected with the Corresponding Society, for the purpose of learning their exercise with musquets; and it was stated, that with a view to instructing them, there had been printed and sold a copper-plate engraving of the manual exercise, accompanied with a book of directions on the subject. This engraving was afterwards produced, and it was proved to have been bespoke by one person, and engraved by another, whose names were mentioned, both of whom were members of the London Corresponding Society, and one of them a secretary to one of the divisions, and to have been sold by another member of the society to several members at a meeting of one of the divisions. A more particular account was afterwards given of a body formed for the purpose of exercising with fire arms, which had taken the name of the Loyal Lambeth Association, but which had held no communication with government, nor received any authority for that purpose. It appears, that although this armed society bore the name of the Loyal Lambeth Association, none of the members belonging to it were of the parish of Lambeth, excepting the original proposer of the association, who was a member of the London Corresponding Society. The admission of persons who were afterwards members of the association was objected to at first, because they did not belong to the London Corresponding Society; but on promise that they would become members of the London Corresponding Society, they were admitted into this armed association. A gun engraver, who is also a member of the London Corresponding Society, and who furnished this association with musquets, was first introduced to the person who set on foot the association by the secretary of the Corresponding Society. This association was regularly trained and exercised in the use of fire arms twice a week. It has been given in evidence, that this association removed from the house of a tradesman in the Borough, where they used to exercise, because they made so much noise with the arms that the workmen must know what they were about, the tradesman having different workmen, who might not be all of the same principle. Upon this suggestion, a committee was appointed to choose proper places for exercise, where the association might not be liable to be interrupted by the officers of police, and two places named to your committee were appointed accordingly, to which the association adjourned in two separate divisions. At one of these places they exercised in a room on the second floor, and with the window curtains drawn, and on some occasions, at another place, by candle light, from eight to ten o'clock at night, with the shutters barred up. At the place where the Lambeth association met, there was a printed ticket of admission with the following inscription engraved on it, "*Liberty to those who dare defend it.*" The object of all the persons who attended the association (as was collected from their conversation) was universal suffrage and annual election. If they could not obtain a reform in parliament in any other way, they meant to have recourse to arms. The committee have traced eighteen stand of arms actually purchased by this association. This number, purchased by persons apparently in very indigent circumstances, is a sufficient proof of their earnestness in the design in which they had engaged. But it further appears, that the same person who supplied this number had engaged to furnish arms, as the numbers who desired to have them increased; and that sixty musquets had been mentioned as likely to be wanted for the associa-

tion. It also appears to your committee, that other institutions of the same nature existed, and that subscriptions had been opened for the purpose of providing musquets. In addition to the means already enumerated for gradually providing pikes and musquets, it has appeared in evidence, that one of the schemes in agitation was to seize the arms in the shops of the gunsmiths in London, and to distribute the arms, so seized, among the members of the London Corresponding Society.

These proceedings in London, sufficiently important in themselves, become still more deserving of serious consideration, when combined with measures of a similar description taken at Sheffield, and in several parts of Scotland, and which not only coincide in point of time, but bear the strongest marks of deliberate concert and connection with the attempts in London, to which your committee have already directed the attention of the house. Your committee have already inserted in this report a letter from a person at Sheffield, found in the possession of the secretary of the London Corresponding Society, and inclosing a direction to another person at Sheffield, who was to forward to the maker of the pikes all such orders as he might receive from London for that purpose.

It has appeared, from the concurrent testimony of several persons examined before the privy council, that this direction was actually given by the secretary of the Corresponding Society to one of its members; that many persons were desirous of procuring pikes; and that subscriptions had been already entered into, with the view of procuring them from Sheffield. One of the other persons apprehended at Sheffield, who had been secretary to the Constitutional Society there, and upon whom a pike was found, acknowledged that he had seen the letter to the secretary of the Corresponding Society in London, containing the inclosure for Norwich; and that the writer told him he had inclosed the letter for Norwich in the other for fear of suspicion: the same person also said, he could not doubt in the least that the pikes were to be furnished to London, according to the contents of the letter which had been explained to him at Sheffield. It appears that some time in March last, a person calling himself Yorke, a member of the Constitutional Society at London, and who was chosen by them as one of their delegates to the convention at Edinburgh, recommended it to the people of Sheffield to take arms, representing it as a matter of right, founded on the Bill of Rights, and observing that the opposite party was arming, and therefore that the other party should be armed also; that Yorke used these recommendations both in private and public; told them in conversation, just after the meeting at Sheffield, where he had been chairman, that pikes were used in France; and recommended to the people to get arms, according to an advertisement published at Sheffield, saying, that it was legal and constitutional, and that they ought to get pikes as in France. This measure of arming was approved of by the greater part of the society at Sheffield, which appears from information before your committee to be very numerous, and to have been subdivided into 45 or 50 small bodies, or different clubs. In consequence of these recommendations, pikes were made at Sheffield under Yorke's orders, and the form and size were regulated by his particular direction?—Your committee think it of importance to call the attention of the house to this circumstance, as they shall have occasion to advert more particularly, in a subsequent part of this report to the principles and views publicly avowed

avowed by Yorke at a meeting held at Sheffield on the 7th of April last. Four persons are stated to have been employed in the manufacture of these pikes, and one of these persons to have worked at them for some weeks past; and it appears that several have been already made and sold to different persons at Sheffield, at the price of 10d. a-piece: the pike taken upon one of the persons apprehended at Sheffield answers precisely to the description given in the letter before inserted. In addition to this account of the measures taken for providing pikes, it must be observed, that the three persons apprehended at Sheffield concur in declaring that they had seen there a pattern of an instrument which has, on different occasions, been used in military operations for impeding the approach of cavalry, and which was stated by the witnesses to be intended to be laid in the road at night for that purpose.—One of them said that he had no doubt that this instrument was formed with the same intention as the pikes, to defend the meeting at Sheffield against the military. It was also stated, that about the time when these arms were prepared, they had resolved at Sheffield (as will appear more particularly in the sequel of the report) that no further petition should be made to parliament on the subject of Reform, although they intended to go on in their demands; and one of the persons examined said, if any meetings were to be held at Sheffield for the purpose of obtaining universal suffrage, and any attempt made to disturb such meeting, he thought the people would be justified in resistance.

While your committee were employed in investigating the origin and progress of the plan for arming the people in London and at Sheffield, they received intelligence of the existence of similar designs in Scotland, which appear to have been in a much greater degree of forwardness, and to have been conducted with such secrecy that they might have produced the most serious consequences, if accident had not led to a timely discovery of their nature and extent before they had been carried into execution. This intelligence was communicated to your committee in several letters from Mr. Secretary Dundas, which contain so full a narrative of the circumstances leading to the discovery of this design, of the scope and nature of the design itself, of the principles with which it was connected, and of the means by which it was to have been accomplished, that your committee have thought they could not lay this important matter before the house in a more satisfactory manner than by inserting the letters at large in this place.—It is however to be observed, that besides what relates immediately to this particular head, these letters contain matters applying to other important branches of the subject of this report; and to which it will be necessary hereafter to refer; and that many of the important circumstances detailed in Mr. Dundas's letters have been also communicated to your committee through other channels.

Whitehall, 19th May 1794.

SIR,

I have received this morning from the sheriff depute of the county of Edinburgh, authentic information of an accidental discovery on the 15th and 16th ult. the general report of which I feel it proper to state to you, as it seems materially connected with the enquiry in which the Secret Committee of the house of commons is now engaged.

The creditors of a bankrupt having received information that part of his goods had been embezzled, and were secreted in the house of an individual, the usual warrant was issued, authorizing a search to be
made

made in the suspected place ; and in carrying it into execution, on the afternoon of the 15th, the officers discovered in a private place, where they appeared to have been concealed, twelve pike or spear heads. The proprietor of the house, who happened to be from home at the time, was soon thereafter taken into custody, and on being carried before the proper magistrate for examination, refused to give any account of these weapons, to whom they belonged, or for what purposes they were intended. On a more narrow search, there was likewise discovered, in a private and concealed part of the house, two other pike or spear heads, similar to the others, two battle axes, and a shaft or pole, with a screw on the end, fitted for receiving either the spear head or battle axe.

Immediate enquiry being made after the persons with whom this individual had lately been seen in company, and two blacksmiths being mentioned among them, their houses and shops were immediately searched : one of the two was taken into custody ; the other escaped and absconded. In the shop of the first of these men there were found four pike or spear heads, finished, fitted with screws and sockets, and ready to be fixed on shafts ; eight battle axes, also fitted and finished ; and twenty blades more not quite finished, but nearly so.

In the shop and dwelling-house of the other, who had absconded, no such weapons were found ; but the apprentices, on being examined before a magistrate, acknowledged that the pike or spear heads first discovered had been privately manufactured in their master's shop during the course of this fortnight past and carried privately to his house as soon as completed.

The battle axes and blades appear to have been manufactured within this fortnight past ; and were intended, as the maker of them said, for the purpose of arming the people, should an invasion take place.— But it appears, that to his apprentices, whom he had employed in assisting him to make them, he pretended they were meant for a gate ; an account obviously false, as he could not point out any gate for which those weapons were intended, nor name any person who had ordered him to frame a gate of so particular a construction.

These circumstances have induced the magistrates to commit all the persons concerned for examination ; and the result of the enquiries which are at present carrying forward, I expect will be regularly communicated to me.— It is proper also to inform you that all the persons chiefly concerned appear to have been members of the British Convention which met at Edinburgh last winter ; and since the dispersion of it have continued the most active and leading persons in the societies, whose delegates composed the principal part of that meeting, who appear at present taking measures for calling another convention of the same nature, which they expect is to take place soon in England ; and some of whom have acknowledged that the propriety of the individuals composing these societies arming themselves with spears and pikes has, within these few weeks past, been the subject of conversation amongst them, and steps taken for carrying that purpose into execution with caution and secrecy.

The silence of one of the persons, the inconsistent and contradictory account of the other, and the flight of the third, throw a very strong suspicion on the purposes and intentions of the parties concerned in this transaction. The sheriff is, in the course of his duty, proceeding to investigate the matter more accurately : But I consider it necessary and proper to communicate through you to the committee information

so intimately connected with the object of its enquiries, however imperfect that information still is, but which I have no doubt will soon be completed.

I am, sir, your most obedient humble servant,

HENRY DUNDAS.

Right Hon. Mr. Pitt.

Whitehall, 23d May, 1794.

SIR,

I have received this morning farther accounts from the sheriff depute of Edinburgh, of the transactions stated in my last letter; and the result of the inquiries since made by that magistrate, and which are still going forward, appear to me of such a nature as to deserve the particular attention of the Secret Committee.

One of the individuals mentioned in my former letter has since made a disclosure, and a person since taken into custody, and who appears to have been privy to the whole transaction, has confessed, that these weapons were the first of a very large number and quantity actually ordered to be made, and intended to be privately dispersed among the members of the various societies throughout Scotland, stiling themselves Friends of the People, and who appear to be at present employed in taking measures for calling together another British Convention of delegates to be held in England. An order has been given from one town in Scotland, for a large quantity of weapons of the nature described; no less a number than 4000 has been mentioned, and more are intended to be distributed in Edinburgh.—Emissaries appear also to have been dispatched, within this fortnight or three weeks past, to the manufacturing towns in the west of Scotland, for the purpose of sounding the inclinations of such of the inhabitants there who are known to be members of these societies; and there is reason to believe, from information received from various different quarters, that these persons have by no means been unsuccessful.

Paisly is in particular alluded to as being in a state of great readiness; and there has been positive information received through other channels, that within these three weeks persons of that description have assembled themselves to a very considerable number in the night time, for the purpose of practising the use of arms. The particulars of this information, and the extent to which these meetings have proceeded, are at present matter of enquiry with the proper magistrates of the place; but the result has not yet been received.

The formation of this plan is now traced home to certain persons, some of whom are in custody, who appear to be entrusted by these societies in Scotland with the most unlimitted powers in directing their future proceedings—carrying on their correspondence—and who act as a Committee of Secrecy, consisting of a certain number of persons, the principal and most active members of the British Convention. The choosing of delegates to the expected convention in England; the place of whose meeting is not yet divulged, and the raising of contributions among the various societies throughout Scotland for defraying the charges of such delegates, appear to be the material part of their present employment, and in which it would seem they have made some progress. And it is the same committee who have for these some weeks past, been consulting and taking measures for arming themselves and the members of the various clubs with pikes and battle axes, and who have employed the persons above in manufacturing them. The
scheme

scheme appears to have been first proposed and agreed upon about a month ago, to have been since carried on with the utmost secrecy and caution; and the weapons, so far as has yet been discovered, manufactured by such persons, in such small quantities, in such circumstances, and under such pretences, as not to render the progress of the work probably liable to suspicion or detection; and it was brought to light by a very accidental and singular incident which I mentioned in my former letter.

I have the satisfaction of observing, that the magistrates and officers of the law in Scotland have been, and still continue, active in the searches and enquiries making at the different suspected places within their respective jurisdictions. In Perth and Dundee nothing has been discovered which can lead me to believe that measures have been taken in either of these places for making arms, the manufacture of which seems to have been confined to Edinburgh, and intended to have been gradually dispersed from thence to such places as required them. No such weapons have been discovered at Paisley, or in its neighbourhood, though the intention of arming, and holding regular nightly meetings, are perfectly ascertained.

Information has also been communicated, of the authenticity of which there is no room to doubt, that a conspiracy has been formed, as soon as a proper number of these weapons were distributed among the Friends of the People in Edinburgh, to seize in the night the persons of the principal magistrates and officers of the law, the banks, the public offices, guards and prison; and, after enticing the soldiery from the castle, by kindling a fire in the middle of the city, to intercept them on their return, by means of different armed parties to be properly stationed for that purpose.

It appears likewise, from indisputable facts, that the most secret and artful means have been and are still using with the Fencible Regiments in Scotland, to excite them to disobedience and mutiny. The printed paper, which I herewith transmit, has been industriously circulated for that purpose.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient humble servant,

HENRY DUNDAS.

Right Hon. Mr. Pitt.

Whitehall, 24th May, 1794.

S I R,

I have received no further accounts of the result of the enquiries going on in Edinburgh; but I am sorry to state that I have received information from the sheriff of the county of Renfrew, confirmed by letters received from other respectable persons in Paisley, that the magistrates of that place having, in the course of their enquiries, committed, on the afternoon of the 19th, a man to custody for further examination, a considerable number of persons (several hundreds) assembled in the evening, and, after choosing a president, whom they addressed by the title of Citizen President, voted a number of resolutions to the following purpose—That a National Convention should be immediately called, to which they would send delegates—that they should not petition parliament, as it was to themselves alone, and to such Convention, they could look for redress. They then proceeded to consider the conduct of the sheriff and magistrates in committing their brother citizen, as he was termed; and, after much discussion as to the propriety

propriety of immediately releasing him by force, the majority seemed inclined to take mild measures first, and to send a deputation to ask his release. But the magistrates having received information of what was intended, and dismissed the man from custody, the mob dispersed with three cheers, having been previously instructed by their president to abstain from further tumult, and to observe a peaceable and orderly conduct.

The authority of the civil magistrate is in the mean time entirely superseded; and until a proper force is sent to protect them in the future execution of their duty, which has been anxiously required by the sheriff and magistrates, they dare not proceed in the common course of legal and judicial enquiry against any of the persons who are suspected of being concerned in these violent and tumultuary proceedings. But it cannot escape the observation of the committee, how accurately this intelligence corresponds with and confirms the information yesterday communicated, as to the state of the minds of these people in that neighbourhood; the alarm which their leaders feel as to the result of the legal enquiries at present depending; and the regular systematic connection between them and the leaders at Edinburgh, as discovered from the yet unfinished and hasty examinations taken in that city. I have the honour to be sir, your most obedient humble servant,

HENRY DUNDAS.

Right Hon. Mr. Pitt.

Whitehall, May 27, 1794.

SIR,

I have this morning received farther information from Scotland, which appears to me proper to be communicated to the committee.

The persons in whose custody the weapons formerly described, were found, appear to have acted for some time past under the name of a Committee of Ways and Means, appointed by the British Convention, and to have been empowered by the various societies throughout Scotland to direct all their future proceedings.—By means of emissaries privately dispatched to different parts of the country this committee has signified to, and prepared a number of the societies for the approaching Convention in England, many of whom have chosen, and all, as far as is yet known, agreed to choose delegates to attend it, and subscribe for their expences. The time and place of meeting was not divulged, and were to be communicated from Edinburgh in proper time, by individuals to be sent from thence for that purpose, whose arrival was daily looked for by several of the different societies. One of the members of the late Convention at Edinburgh appears within this fortnight past to have been dispatched, and to have actually performed an extensive tour through the west part of Scotland, to have visited in his progress the towns of Queensferry, Falkirk, Stirling, St. Ninians, Kelsyth, Kirkintulloch, Campsie, Glasgow, and Paisly; in all of which places he appears to have met with the principal persons concerned in these societies, to have left with them, and the members of the societies, copies of a circular letter from the committee of Edinburgh, and instructed them in what manner they were in future to carry on their correspondence; and to have suggested to them the propriety of furnishing themselves with arms, for the purpose of defence, under the pretence of defending themselves against foreign troops.—An attempt has been made to distribute some of the weapons lately discovered at Edinburgh, by means of persons privately dispatched

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to

to the country for that purpose ; and which seems only to have failed in its execution from the timidity of the person solicited to do it.

An individual of the same description has been taken into custody in the country, who appears to have commissioned and actually received from England, some musquets and bayonets. On being questioned by the proper magistrate, he has refused giving any explanation, farther than that he commissioned them in the way of his business, but it does not appear that he ever dealt in such articles before ; no person appears to have commissioned him to procure any such ; and there seems to be full evidence of his having solicited others to purchase what they of themselves were not thinking of or which to provide.

He admits having corresponded with the London Corresponding Society, on the subject of a convention, and that society of which he is a leader had agreed to send delegates to it, as soon as the time and place of meeting should be divulged.

Requisition has been made by the magistrates and principal inhabitants of Paisly, for a military force to protect them in the execution of their duty, and in their persons and properties ; which has been duly attended to. It is with much satisfaction I inform you, that the gentlemen of estate and character, in the county of Renfrew, have voluntarily stepped forward, and determined to support the authority of the civil magistrate.

I have the honour to be, sir,
your very humble servant,

HENRY DUNDAS.

Right Hon. Mr. Pitt.

Whitehall, June 2, 1794.

SIR,

The information I have received this morning from Edinburgh enables me to state to the committee that the transactions communicated in my former letters are farther cleared up by the enquiries which have since taken place in that city.

Some persons who absconded on the first discovery of the arms concealed in certain houses have been discovered and apprehended ; and the result of these farther enquiries confirms, in almost every particular, the account received from other quarters, and the import of which I have already laid before the committee.—The establishment of a Secret Committee at Edinburgh, invested with full powers to direct the future operations of the societies throughout Scotland ; the regular correspondence privately carried on by means of emissaries dispatched to the different towns ; the ascertaining the exact number of persons in these societies, who were directed to provide themselves with arms, and to hold themselves in readiness for any measure which the Secret Committee might in due time communicate ; are confirmed by every account and information which the magistrates have received. And an individual who has been lately taken into custody has confirmed the account received from a different quarter, of the dangerous design planned by the Edinburgh Committee, of effecting a general insurrection as soon as they were ready and prepared for carrying it into execution, by the seizure of the principal magistrates and officers of the law at midnight, and possessing themselves of the prisons and public offices, as stated to you in my letter of the 23d of May, and then communicated through a different channel from that which the present confirmation of these circumstances has been received. The plan

plan seems not only to have been discussed and deliberated on by the ringleaders at Edinburgh, but to have proceeded a certain degree in its steps towards actual execution, which appear to have been conducted with the utmost caution; and there is reason to believe, that the execution of the plan was not to be confined to Edinburgh, but was meant to take place in some of the most considerable towns in Scotland on a certain day, and at one and the same time. The proper and usual steps have been taken for bringing the offenders to trial; and those against whom the information chiefly points are detained in custody.

I have the honour to be, sir,

your very humble servant,

HENRY DUNDAS.

Right Hon. Mr. Pitt.

From what has been stated it appears, that the designs of arming, as far as it has yet proceeded, has been conducted with great secrecy and caution, at the same time with a remarkable degree of uniformity and concert in some parts of the kingdom remote from each other. The weapons principally provided seem to have been peculiarly calculated for the purposes of sudden violence, and to have been chosen in conformity to the example of what has recently passed in France. The actual progress made in the execution of the design, during the short period of a few weeks, sufficiently shews what might have been expected, if the societies had proceeded without interruption, in increasing the number of their members, and the fund for providing arms.

YOUR COMMITTEE will next proceed to lay before the house an account of various remarkable circumstances, which have appeared in the course of this investigation, and which furnish striking instances, either of the general principles on which the chief promoters of this plan have acted, or of specific measures which they had in contemplation, and which, from their nature and importance, deserved to be particularly noticed.

The general disposition of the persons engaged in these measures, to applaud and promote the new political principles adopted in France, has been stated in the former report, and will be more detailed in the sequel: but it seems proper to your committee here to mention some of the letters of two of the most active members of the Corresponding Society, which shew their adherence to the cause of France in the present war; their conviction of the connection between that cause and their own objects; and their view even of availing themselves, if possible, of the assistance of the French arms in carrying their design into execution.

In a letter from Hardy to the United Societies at Norwich, dated the 17th October, 1793, which is inserted in the appendix, there is this remarkable passage:—"The rejoicings for the capture of Valenciennes were not confined to Norwich alone. The ignorant every where else throughout the nation betrayed their imbecility on the occasion; but *the taking of a town*, the slaughtering of thousands of human beings; the laying waste whole provinces, or the enslaving a nation (*however great evils they may be*) can only, for a small space of time, retard the progress of truth and reason; *be not dishearted therefore*, pursue your plan, instruct mankind, and constitutionally set your faces against existing abuses: be assured that many are our friends, who only wait a favourable opportunity openly to join us, while our ene-

mies have much enfeebled themselves and their cause by arbitrary exertions: despotism is at its last gasp; one or two campaigns more will terminate its existence." And in a subsequent letter from Margarot to the United Societies at Norwich, dated in March last, the sentiments expressed are still more striking:—"This morning ten ships of war have left Spithead for the channel, and it is reported that the Brest fleet is out.—Rumour, always magnifying things, says, there are seventy sail of the French at sea, if so there must be a number of transports among them, and a DESCENT MAY PROBABLY BE THE CONSEQUENCE. For God's sake, my worthy friends, do not relax in the cause of freedom—continue as you have begun;—consolidate your own societies;—unite with others;—persevere, and make no doubt but sooner or later your endeavours will be crowned with success." At the time of writing this last letter, Margarot was no longer in a situation to take a part in the proceedings of the society, being then on board the vessel in which he was to be transported. But it appears to your committee, that these expressions from him, are of no small importance, considering the share which he appears, by much concurrent evidence, to have had, previous to his conviction, in directing the measures which were adopted; the uniform approbation and attachment which those societies have shewn him since that date; and above all, that these very sentiments are addressed to the United Societies at Norwich, and that the mention of an expected descent from France is immediately followed by an exhortation to them to proceed, with fresh vigour, in the pursuit of their designs in this country.

The same spirit appears in a letter from the secretary of the Corresponding Society in the month of January 1794: *Now is the time for us to do something worthy of men; the brave defenders of liberty south of the English channel are performing wonders, driving their enemies before them like chaff before the whirlwind.*

Your committee place less reliance on accounts of words used in conversation than on evidence resulting from written documents; but they nevertheless think it proper to mention, that it has been distinctly stated in evidence, that, in the presence of two or three principal members of the Corresponding Society, a person (whose name was mentioned) used the expression, speaking of the French, *that a victory of theirs in Flanders was as useful to the cause as victory in St. George's Fields*; and the same person appears to have held a conversation with these members of the society, relative to the advantage which would be derived if the French could land 5000 men in this country, to join those who should rise here.

Another leading circumstance has appeared to your committee, which, however ineffectual it has naturely proved, furnishes a strong collateral proof of the extent of the views entertained, and that no means, however criminal, were neglected for promoting them. The circumstance referred to is a design, which has been the frequent subject of conversation among some members of the Corresponding Society, of endeavouring to seduce the army from their duty, and the actual employment of emissaries to tamper with the soldiers. In conformity with these views, it also has appeared, that it was intended to prepare an address to the army; and a paper has been discovered in Scotland, which has been already referred to, the object of which was to endeavour to excite disaffection in the Fencible Regiments in that part of the kingdom, and which has actually been circulated with much industry among the soldiers of that description.

Various

Various other schemes of the most daring and criminal nature are also stated, on the evidence of persons who were present, to have been at different times the subject of conversation among persons, the greatest part of whom were members of this society. It even appears that a project has been particularly and repeatedly agitated among them, of striking a sudden blow, and beginning by securing the Royal Family, and the Members of both Houses of Parliament, with hope (as it was expressed) 'that the army, being without leaders, would no longer oppose their attempt.' Particular individuals have been pointed out in these conversations, as objects of personal vengeance for their public conduct. Evidence has been given of discourses held concerning the rescue of the delegates of the Scotch Convention, while on board the transport in the river. An attack on Newgate was meditated, according to a particular plan referred to in the conversation, with the view of releasing the prisoners. A similar conversation was held with respect to an attack on the Tower; and in the letter from the secretary of state, which has been inserted in a former part of the report it appears, that there is direct evidence of a plan regularly concerted at Edinburgh, for seizing at an appointed time, all the Public Offices in that city, the Barks, and the principal Members of the Courts of Justice; and for making a similar attempt (in consequence of a secret concert among the members of the societies in different places) at one and the same time, in some of the most considerable towns in Scotland.

Your committee do not state the various circumstances which have been enumerated in this part of the report, as shewing that the extensive projects, as far as relates to England, were as yet regularly digested, or in sufficient forwardness for actual execution; but the evidence before them gives them every reason to believe that these views have been deliberately entertained, and made the repeated subject of conversation; and they cannot but consider them as strong indications of the principles and intentions of the parties concerned, and of the nature of the measures which might have been expected if they had proceeded without interruption, in increasing their numbers, and in providing arms in the different modes already stated.

There remains another circumstance which, however, as far as it has yet been investigated, is traced distinctly only to two individuals, both of whom were members of the Corresponding Society, and principally concerned in some of their most remarkable transactions; Whether any other members of the society were or were not acquainted with it, has not appeared to your committee. Three copies have been produced to your committee (in all material parts conformable to each other) of a paper which purports to be a draft of resolutions intended to be proposed at the meeting which took place at Chalk Farm on the 14th of April 1794. From the blank left for the place of meeting, it seems probable that it was prepared before that place was fixed upon: The resolutions are different from those which passed at the meeting, and there is no reason to believe that they were in fact proposed there; but distinct evidence has been given of the hand-writing being that of the person in whose possession one of the copies was found, who is also proved to have shewn them as the resolutions which he intended should be proposed at the meeting, and the two other copies were found among the papers of one of the most active members of the society, who appears, previous to the meeting at Chalk Farm, to have been appointed, in conjunction with some others,

others, to arrange the measures to be adopted, and at whose suggestion (subsequent to that appointment) the meeting is said to have been postponed beyond the time originally proposed, because (as he is said to have represented) more time was necessary to make known the sentiments of the society in bold and nervous resolutions. Your committee think it right here to insert the paper itself, on which they will forbear to make any comment.

*At a General Meeting of the London Corresponding Society, held at
on Monday, the 14th Day of April, 1794.*

Citizen ——— in the Chair.

Resolved, that all sovereign, legislative, and judicial powers are the rights of the people; and though the people have delegated those their original powers to others, in *trust*, for the benefit of the community, yet the rights themselves are reserved by the people, and cannot be absolutely parted with by the people to those persons who are employed to conduct the business of the state.

Resolved, That the Constitution of England is held by the King, Lords, and Commons, and other Officers appointed by the people, in *trust*, for the benefit of the people; and though these trustees may regulate and improve the constitution, yet they cannot alter or subvert it without committing treason against the nation.

Resolved, That *Magna Charta*, or THE GREAT CHARTER OF THE LIBERTIES OF ENGLAND, made in the reign of king John; THE PETITION OF RIGHTS, assented to by parliament in the reign of King Charles the First; and the several laws made at and in consequence of the *Glorious Revolution* in the year 1688, are declaratory of those parts of the constitution of England, which are in and by them respectively declared.

Resolved, That the office of KING of England was not instituted by the people merely as an office of profit and honour to the king, but he was so appointed as chief trustee and guardian of the constitution and rights of the people; and that important and laborious personal duties are annexed to the regal office, the objects of which are, to promote the good of the people, and preserve their rights in full vigour from innovation and corruption.

Resolved, That it is the duty of the King to preserve the constitution of England, and the rights of the people, against every incroachment; and, in order to enforce that duty, the following oath is required to be taken by every king on his accession to the throne of Great Britain; to wit: The archbishop or bishop shall say—Will you solemnly promise and swear to govern the people of this kingdom of England, and the dominions thereto belonging, according to the statutes in parliament agreed on, and the laws and customs of the same.

The king or queen shall say, "I solemnly pronounce so to do." Archbishop or bishop—"Will you, to your power, cause law and justice in mercy to be executed in all your judgment." ANSWER. "I will."

After this, the king or queen, laying his or her hand on the Holy Gospel, shall say—"The things which I have before promised, I will perform and keep: So help me God."—And then shall kiss the book.

Resolved,

Resolved, That his present majesty King George the Third, on his accession to the throne of these realms, did solemnly take the said oath.

Resolved, That the constitutional rights of the people have been violated, and that it is the duty of the people, in the present crisis, to assemble and enquire into the innovations or infringements which have been made upon the rights of the people, and how far the declarations of the constitution, as they were settled at the aforesaid revolution, remain in force, and which of them have been violated, and by whom; and also whether such innovations, infringements, or violations, have been committed from the negligence or corruption of those who have been trusted with the government of the state.

Resolved, That this society do invite the people to meet in their respective neighbourhoods, to elect one or more person or persons as delegates to meet in a convention, to be held on the day of next, at such place as shall be appointed by the Secret Committee of this society, and that the delegates so elected do forthwith transmit to the secretary of this society, No. 9, Piccadilly, London, the vouchers of their several elections, in order that the place of meeting may be duly notified to them.

Resolved, That it is the right and bounden duty of the people to punish all traitors against the nation; and that the following words are now not a part of the oath of allegiance; to wit: "I declare it is not lawful, upon any pretence whatever, to take arms against the king."

Before the committee quit this part of the subject, they think it not immaterial to take some notice of the different means used to disseminate such principles as have been stated through the lower orders of society, and to familiarise their minds, by every possible artifice, to such ideas as might prepare them to be the instruments of the most dangerous and desperate designs. Some of these means may, at first sight, be considered as too trivial to be mentioned on an occasion of this importance; but they appear to your committee in a very different light, when they recollect that an essential part of such a plan as has been in agitation was to seduce and corrupt the thoughtless and uninformed, and to make use of the channels of communication best adapted to this purpose. The appearance of insignificance and levity, which belongs, at first sight, to this part of the system, is, in truth, only an additional proof of the art and industry with which it has been pursued. The measures employed for this purpose appear to have been deliberately prepared, and every contrivance used to mix them (in the shape most likely to captivate attention) with the ordinary occupations or amusements of those on whom they were intended to operate. Accordingly lectures have been delivered on political subjects, calculated, from their very extravagance, to catch the attention of the audience, and in the course of them every topic has been employed that could inflame their minds, alienate them from the laws and constitution of their country, and habituate them to principles of sedition and rebellion. The most violent publications to the same effect have been secretly, but generally, circulated in hand-bills, both in the metropolis and in the remote parts of the country. Every point that could excite discontent, according to the pursuits, interests, or prejudices of different classes, has been successively dwelt on, and always in such a manner

ner as to connect it with the leading design. The attempt to accomplish this end has appeared even in the shape of play-bills and songs; seditious toasts, and a studied selection of the tunes which have been most in use in France since the revolution, have been applied to the same purpose, of endeavouring to render deliberate incitements to every species of treason familiar to the minds of the people.

Having thus stated the points which the committee have thought it material separately to lay before the house, they will now proceed to those particulars which will give a full and distinct view of the rise, progress, and nature of the general design, with which the facts already stated are essentially connected; for this purpose your committee will state in their report the points which appear most worthy of attention, inserting in the Appendix a more particular statement of the several proceedings to which they refer. In doing this it will be necessary to advert to transactions, some of which took place at an early period, and have already attracted observation; but which it is nevertheless material to insert in the order in which they took place, because they are highly important in explaining more recent proceedings, and giving a connected view of the whole system.

The period from which it appears to your committee material to trace in this view the proceedings of the Society for Constitutional Information, is that of the publication of the pamphlet so well known under the title of "*Rights of Man*, by Thomas Paine."

Your committee have already referred, in their former report, to the approbation given by the society to this work; and this is one of the points on which they should not think it necessary now to dwell, if they did not feel it essential to the object before stated, of developing the rise and progress of the system which they are tracing, to call the attention of the house to the leading features of a work thus approved and recommended, in order to compare it with subsequent transactions of which it may be considered as the foundation.

In this pamphlet, published in the year 1791, the National Assembly of France was represented as occupied in establishing a constitution founded on the Rights of Man, and the authority of the people, the only authority on which (it was stated) government had a right to exist in any country; monarchy and hereditary succession were treated as absurdities; the Revolution in 1688, and the succession of the house of Hanover, were also made the subject of ridicule; and a distinction was drawn between two modes of government, which were stated to prevail in the world: first, government by election and representation; and, secondly, government by hereditary succession. The former generally known by the name of Republic, the latter by that of Monarchy and Aristocracy. On the 23d of March 1791, the society resolved, That the thanks of the society be given to Mr. Thomas Paine, in the terms expressed in the copy of their resolution of this day, inserted in the Appendix. A continuation of Paine's book, intituled "*Rights of Man, Part the Second*," combining principle and practice, was published early in 1792, in which the principles of the British Constitution were again attacked; the principles on which the French Constitution, accepted by the King in 1791, had been established, were approved, with an exception of the hereditary succession to the crown. This pamphlet, recommending the overthrow of the British Constitution, and the establishment of a democratical senate, as the sole legislative and executive power of the state, was also circulated with great industry; and the Society for Constitutional Information, on the
16th

